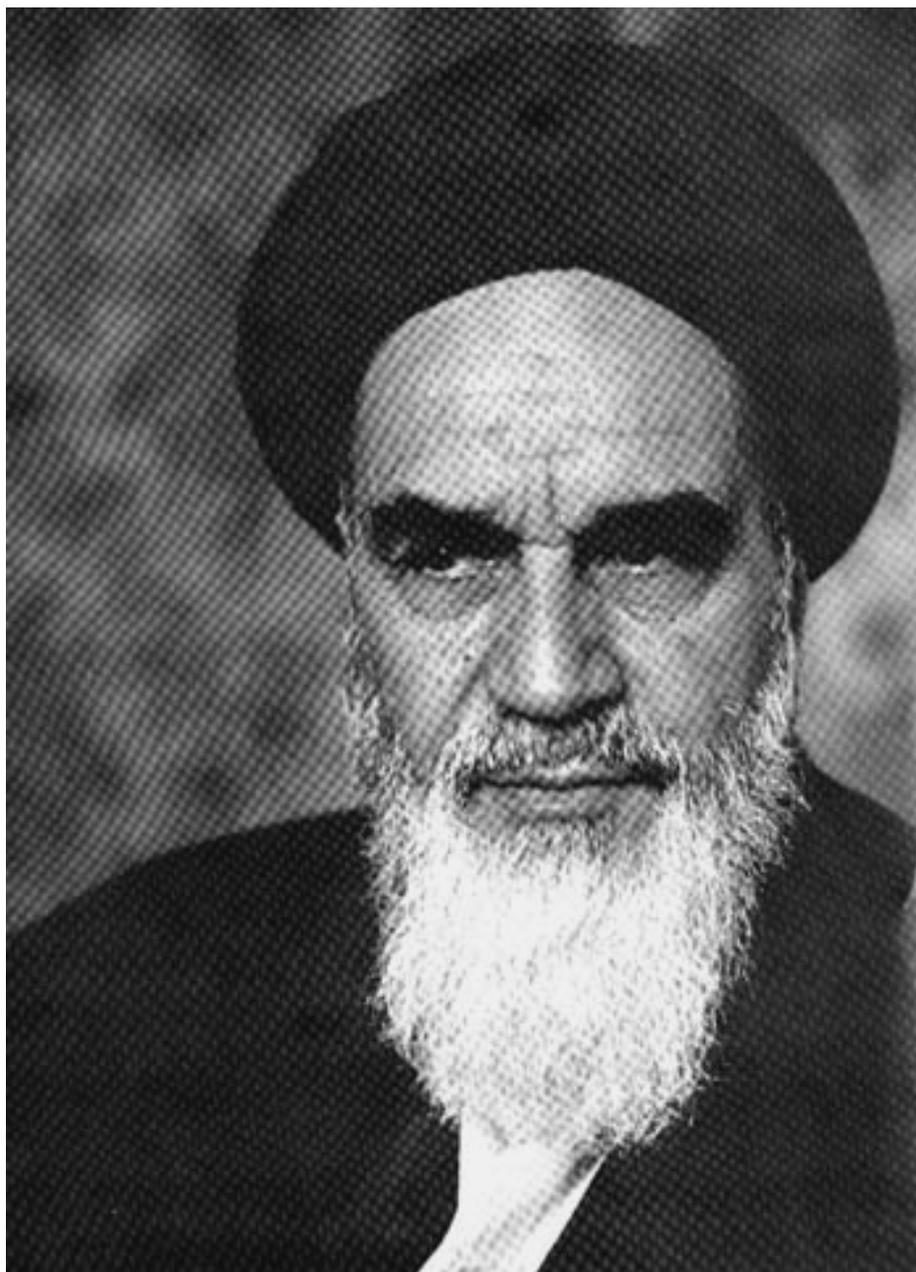




**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
The All-Beneficent, The All-Merciful**



Manifestation of the Friend

A collection of memoirs about Imam Khomeini (s)

**The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam
Khomeini's Works
(International Affairs Department)**

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Transliteration Symbols

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>	<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
	’		a
	b		t
	th		j
	ḥ		kh
	d		dh
	r		z
	s		sh
	ṣ		ḍ
	ṭ		ẓ
	‘		gh
	f		q
	k		l
	m		n
	h		w
	y		ah
<u>Long Vowels</u>		<u>Short Vowels</u>	
	ā		a
	ū		u
	ī		i
Persian Letters			
<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>	<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
	p		ch
	zh		g

Introduction



In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

Of the desired methods of every educational system is presentation of a role model or paradigm that because of its corporeality and perceptibility can have the maximum relevance and provide the most benefits. However, depending on the direction, tendency and objective of the selection, this role model shall play both a positive and negative role. In further explanation of this subject, it regards focus on religious educational systems and the position of human being in those systems to be necessary and adds that according to the viewpoint of Islam and with regard to human dignity, firstly, every person does not deserve to be introduced as a role model and paradigm for others to emulate. The glorious Qur'an presents the honorable Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) and also the great prophet of God His Holiness Abraham (ﷺ) as role models for mankind to emulate.

Secondly, perspective of Islam is to view positively the growth and perfection of human beings and recommends becoming a 'good paradigm' like him and warns one on going in the opposite direction.

Thirdly, from among the followers of these exalted personalities, there are distinguished individuals whose lives, ways and principles and behavior can be the best example and model for the masses. It is as if with their behavior and deeds these personalities call upon others to "be like us"; to "live like us" and so forth. Undoubtedly, in this era which is the era of materialism and

greed and avarices and is the age of alienation of spirituality and divine values, His Holiness Imām Khomeinī is a personality who by achieving the most splendid attributes and moral principles, has incorporated in himself the best of virtues while with clear monotheistic thinking and clear and lucid expression brimming with spirituality and actions and behaviors filled with devotion and sincerity, put forward a true picture of the pure Muḥammedan Islam and a presentable paradigm and role model for human beings.

Here, a comprehensive perspective of his fruitful life and a passing reference to the events and incidents is altogether appropriate.

In the beginning of the twentieth century and while the western world was rapidly advancing and progressing, the reign of the Qājār dynasty in these years proved destructive and inauspicious for the people of Iran. As narrated by historians and writers, famine and hunger, theft and banditry, chaos and insecurity, absence of hygiene and welfare and so forth and the absence of basic amenities added to the miseries of the people of Iran. “The Constitutionality Movement” with the plots and oppositions by the agents of Britain in the court of the Qājār rulers and likewise, domestic differences and the treachery of a group of westernized intellectuals had gone astray. Despite the leadership role of the clergy at the beginning of this movement, it was sidelined by means of various conspiracies and the authoritarian rule restored. The clannish nature of the Qājār dynasty and the weakness and incompetence of its rulers brought about sever economic and social hardships in Iran and gave a free hand to the feudal landlords and miscreants thereby taking away security from the people.” (Ḥamīd Anṣārī: Narrative of Awakening, p. 21) In such circumstances and situations, at the dawn of the first day of the Iranian month of Mehr (September 23, 1902) of the solar year 1281 equivalent to the twentieth day of the lunar month of Jumādī ath-Thānī 1320 A.H., coinciding with the birth anniversary of Her Holiness Fāṭimah Zahrā (‘a), the beloved daughter of the honorable prophet of Islam (ṣ), in the provincial town of Khomein, a son was born who would later on with his divine uprising, shape the best and most honorable destiny of the people of Iran. The name of this infant who was born exactly 1902 years after the birth of Jesus Christ—the great Divine prophet of God—was named the same Arabic name of His holiness meaning “Rūḥullāh”. Certainly on that day nobody would guess that this newborn would turn out to be that same Imām Khomeinī who would revive the religion of God and the lofty divine values in the era of transformation of these values.

While he was just four months and twenty-two days old, his father who in those days was the refuge and supporter of the hapless people and a symbol of struggle against oppression and tyranny of local feudal landlords and bullies was martyred at the hands of those very tyrants. Thus Rūḥullāh was reared under the guardianship of his mother Bānū Hājar, his paternal aunt Bānū Šāhibah Khānom and later his elder brother Sayyid Murtaḍā Pasandīdeh. However, at the young age of fifteen, he was deprived of the blessed presence of his mother as well as his paternal aunt. During this period in Khomein, he completed part of his education and thereafter at the age of 17, entered the Arāk Theological School and was tutored by Ḥāj Shaykh Abdul Kareem Ḥā'irī Yazdī who was one of the greatest theologians of Iran at that time. However, after three months when Ḥāj Shaykh 'Abdul-Karīm went to the Qum Theological School, he too took up residence in Qum and earned the highest degree in theology over there and became one of the most outstanding tutors and theologian of the Qum Theological School. Among the tutors who played a fundamental role in his intellectual and personality development one can name the late Āyatullāh Shāhābādī.

Rūḥullāh who in this period became famously known as 'Ḥāj Āqā Rūḥullāh' with regard to the sensitive and curious spirit and precise and calculated planning as well as tireless efforts and hard work joined the ranks of the distinguished and outstanding names in the history of these fields of study. In addition to teaching and training prominent protégés in these fields of study, he is also the author and composer of works that are in their own right of the highest order and unique in this period.

On the other hand, self-development and piety that was the permanent foundation and raw material of his life and all his programs, had built such a comprehensive personality out of him that "his basic characteristics are rarely found in ordinary individuals and if even one of the traits are observed in an individual, he is regarded as a distinguished individual leave alone that all those superior traits gather in a single person. The Imām was an extremely prudent, farsighted, wise, shrewd, patient and knowledgeable person such that each of these personality traits is sufficient to place an individual in an outstanding category and earn the respect of all concerned." (Refer to the book "*Ḥadīth-e Wilāyat*" by His Holiness Āyatullāh Khāmene'ī, vol. 1, p. 23).

However, this personality with all these superior traits sought the consent of the Blessed and Almighty God in all matters and placed his trust and worshipped Him alone. Perhaps this is the biggest factor that brought in its

wake all his successes as well as all these favors for human beings. In addition to academic qualifications and religious studies and distinguishing himself in these fields as well as self-development and spiritual purification and adorning the soul with precious individual virtues and qualities, right from his youth he possessed a spirit of combating oppression and injustice and was interested in pursuing political and social issues that continued and was perfected parallel with his academic and spiritual perfection. This path and way continued in various forms during the reign of Riḍā Khān and also his son Muḥammad Riḍā such that after the demise of Supreme Āyatullāh Borūjerdī, the issue of provincial and state assemblies was raised and pursuant to it, the subject of referendum of the Shāh and the so-called ‘White Revolution’ of the Shāh and the people that led to the Khordād 15 (June 4) incident. The role of Hāj Āqā Rūḥullāh in all these movements of the people of Iran against the oppressive monarchy was well-recognized such that on the dawn of Khordād 15 of the solar year of 1343 (June 4, 1963), he was arrested and imprisoned for ten days in Tehran and was freed due to several factors. However, while combating domestic oppression and injustice and being opposed to domination of the destiny of Muslims by foreigners, he once again revolted against the issue of ‘Capitulation’ and granting of immunity to American nationals in Iran and delivered the most virulent speech against America and its local agents and Israel and issued the most strongly-worded proclamation that ultimately led to his exile to Turkey.

During the period of his exile that lasted for a year in Turkey and thereafter continued for 13 years in the city of Najaf in Iraq, in addition to establishing the strongest seminary in Najaf, the struggle continued by various means and was led by Hāj Āqā Rūḥullāh until the beginning of the month of November 1977 when the flames of the struggle and the Revolution was ignited with the martyrdom of his learned and virtuous son the late Āyatullāh Sayyid Muṣṭafā Khomeinī. As a result of restrictions imposed on him, he was compelled to travel to Paris and guide the struggle and the Revolution from there. Finally, with the departure of the Shāh from Iran on January 16, 1979, and culmination of the struggle, Āyatullāh Khomeinī arrived in Iran on February 1, 1979 in the midst of a tumultuous and magnificent welcome that was unparalleled in history. Thereafter, with his guidance and leadership, the Islamic and popular Revolution of Iran triumphed on February 11, 1979 and the dynamic system of the Islamic Republic of Iran replaced the system of monarchy. In this way, Imām Khomeinī played the greatest role in liberation of human beings and founded one of the most popular governments based on the doctrine of Islam.

Perhaps one can consider the most important objective of this self-made man whether in the role of a student of religious sciences and whether in the position of a prominent and distinguished tutor and theologian of the Qum Theological School; and whether in the position of leadership of the Revolution and the movement and whether in the position of a religious authority and leader of the divine system of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, was to prove subservience to the will of God in all his activities throughout these stages and performance of duty based on this subservience. This resulted in the liberation of human beings and reaching them to their nobility and perfection; and in actions such as combating injustice and struggle against the influence of foreigners and aliens whether at the national level and whether at the international level of the world of Islam and beyond such as the struggle against the Shāh, America, Israel and defense of the rights of Palestinians and similar issues. Towards this end, it is credible, acceptable and quite obvious that by following the lofty teachings of Islam in their various dimensions, this self-made man had attained perfection and in his worship of the Exalted Truth had reached to such a lofty position that he was able to manifest the Truth in various individual and social dimensions.

What you read in this book is a glimpse of the superior traits of this comprehensive personality that reveals the perfection-attaining as well as the unity and cohesion of that great human being especially in the area of leadership of the Islamic society.

This work has been prepared in four parts namely:

The first part “With the People” deals with the place and status of the people according to the viewpoint of Imām Khomeinī that states his love and sentiments for the people in the position of an individual and humility and respect for the law at the social level. It is necessary to mention that by looking deeply at the philosophy of Imām Khomeinī, one discerns that firstly, the Imām considers the principal role in social issues especially problems related to the struggle and the Revolution and establishment of the Islamic Republic system and thereafter its preservation and safeguarding to belong to the people and strongly emphasizes this matter and the involvement of the people in affairs and in social issues. On the other hand, considering that he regards the people to be the de facto rulers of the Revolution and the system, he strongly recommends to the officials to serve the people and considers “serving the Truth to be contingent on serving the masses.”

The second part which reveals the subtle spirit of the Imām one can discern with a little attention that it is one of the essential qualities in the life of a divine leader.

The third part deals with behavioral methods that although it occurs in the life of an individual, but its social role is extremely prominent and critical while the fourth part “role model of strength and meticulousness” deals with the personality and individual traits of the Imām. In general, these traits, qualities and behavioral and ethical values of Imām Khomeinī had made such an outstanding and superior personality out of him that in fact it was a prominent example of endowment with divine morals and possession of divine qualities. Thus it is quite appropriate that all his behaviors, actions, policies and principles be named “the Face of a Friend”. ✍

With greetings of peace,
Asghar Mīr-Shekārī
February 1, 2008

Part 1: With the People

Being Loved by the People and Loving the People

Simple and popular living

The lifestyle of the Imām was extremely simple and loved by the people. Sometimes when we would come out of his classes, we would go to ask him some questions. On the way we would see that he would visit the shops very ordinarily and would personally make the household purchases. This simplicity and down to earth approach of his to living was a true interpretation of piety. He would consume little and give out a lot of good while his presence benefited others. Even at the time when he became a supreme religious authority, he pursued this policy of simple-living and piety and in his view, public wealth was of special importance.¹

The telegram must be printed for the people

Sometimes the clergy would adopt the most hard-line and devastating stances against the radicals but the masses would generally not be informed of them. Sometimes also they would assume that relations between them were basically good! However, the Imām from the beginning of the movement in 1962, at a meeting with the theologians of Qum proposed that the telegraphic messages that were exchanged between the theologians and the Shāh's regime be printed and published for the people so that the general public would be fully informed of the clashes and stances of the involved parties. Not much later the Imām totally transformed the method of dealing with the regime and instead of addressing the Shāh, the government and other

¹ Simple and popular Living as quoted by Āyatullāh Imāmī Kāshānī in *Āyeneh—Husn*, pp. 54-55.

authorities by means of telegram; he would speak directly with the people and resorted to officially issuing notifications.¹

The doors of my house must be kept open to the public

In the days of the beginning of the struggle against the monarchy, I was one day seated beside the Imām and a large crowd had arrived from Tehran. One of the doors of the house was closed. The Imām became aware of this and said: “Who has closed this door?” Someone replied that in order not to inconvenience the people, the door was closed on the orders of Ḥāj Āqā Muṣṭafā. The Imām retorted with discomfort that, “No, open the door; let the people be free; nobody should interfere in my house. The doors of my house must be kept open to the public.”²

They must hit me on my head with these sticks

In the incident of the attack by agents of the inauspicious Pahlavī regime on the Fayḍiyyah Theological School, I was initially at the Fayḍiyyah School. I saw the situation in the class and the seminary to be abnormal and thus left the theological school and went to the house of the Imām in the middle of the class session. We were sitting with some seminary students in his presence and discussing the situation at the seminary. As we were discussing, some seminary students who were beaten up and injured entered the house of the Imām and gave an account of the happenings at the seminary and the beating, killing and wounding of the seminary students. One of the seminary students asked that the door of his house be closed in case they attacked the house. The Imām replied; No, I will not permit.” One of the theologians (late Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Lavāsānī) who was a friend of the Imām said; “It is not a bad proposal. Please allow the door to be closed... it is dangerous.” The Imām retorted: “I said no and if you insist then I will leave the house and take to the streets. They must hit me on my head with these sticks with which they beat up the seminary students. Now should I close the door of my house? What are you saying?”³

¹ The telegram must be printed for the people, Sayyid Ḥamīd Rūḥānī, adapted from “*Siyāreh-e Imām Khomeinī*, vol. 1, p. 119.

² The doors of my house must be kept open to the public: Āyatullāh Mas‘ūdī Khomeinī, *Ibid*, p. 137.

³ They must hit me on my head with these sticks: Āyatullāh Amīnī, *Ibid*, p. 138.

He no longer celebrated

At the beginning when the Imām came to Najaf, religious feasts such as *Fiṭr* Feast, Feats of Sacrifice, mid-Sha‘bān, Third of Sha‘bān, Thirteenth of Rajab, birthday of Her Holiness Fāṭimah Zahrā (‘a) and such feasts the Imām would celebrate sitting in the external yard and the seminary students and the men would come to visit. But when news of imprisonment and torture of the Muslim fighters reached the ears of the Imām, he totally shunned holding and participating in these celebrations and did no longer celebrate.¹

How should I go to Kūfah?

The weather in Najaf was extremely hot such that at times the temperature reaches 50 degrees Centigrade and causes a lot of discomfort. One day I went together with some of the brethren to the Imām and said: “Sir, this heat is intense; you are also come of age and all the people go to Kūfah to pass the nights. There the climate is better. You too should go there.” In reply he stated: “How should I go to Kūfah for its better climate when my brethren are imprisoned in Iran.”²

Do all the seminary students own refrigerators that we should also have one?

A domestic in the house of the Imām narrated about starting of living in Najaf of the Imām and how they did not have a refrigerator in the house whereas most homes in Najaf had one. Considering the need for a refrigerator there, one day I told Āqā Muṣṭafā that: “Hāj Āqā, buy a refrigerator for us.” He replied in the positive but after he had consulted with the Imām, he had replied that: “Do all the seminary students own a refrigerator that we should also have one?” After a period of time when during visits we noticed that all of them did have refrigerators we mentioned it to the Imām. It was then that the Imām allowed a small refrigerator to be arranged.³

¹ He no longer celebrated: *Hujjat al-Islām Farahī, Ibid*, p. 99.

² How should I go to Kūfah? *Āyatullāh Nāṣirī, ibid.*, p. 101.

³ Do all the seminary students own a refrigerator that we too should have one? Dr. (Mrs.) Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Mirror of Beauty*, pp. 126-127.

I did not see that place to meet with my expectations

Before going to Paris, with regard to the preconceived notions that we had of that city, we thought that it would be a well-equipped home with all facilities arranged for the Leader of the Revolution so that at any moment one could send and receive messages from around the world. When I entered the courtyard of the house of the Imām I was confronted with a large crowd of people. There were a large number of shoes that were all soiled because of the rainfall. When I entered the house, a small curtain was hanging with the nail in the middle loosened. I set aside the curtain and went to the other side. It was a small room with a small mattress on which the Imām would sit. There was no sign of the expected and preconceived facilities and items of comfort and easy living and on the whole, it did not meet with my expectations.¹

That was my best moment

After the speech at the Behesht-e-Zahrā Cemetery, the Imām expressed the desire to join the crowd. There is also a photo of the Imām without the turban and the robe caught in the middle of the crowd. The Imām would state later that: “I felt as if my soul was departing.” The Imām meant that the best of moments was the time when he was being demolished under the hands and feet of the people. This by itself reveals the utmost humility and sincerity of the Imām in relation to the people such that he expressed his feelings for them in this manner.²

I want to kiss your forehead

On the days when the Imām would go to the ‘Alawī Theological School and the people would meet him in groups (men in the morning and women in the afternoon) there would be a great rush and normally a number of people would become indisposed and faint and would be taken to the hospital in an ambulance. Once when I was with the Imām, in the midst of that throng and huge crowd, the eyes of the Imām fell on a ten-year old boy whose weak physical condition was dangerous. He was both crying as well as trying to push his way through to get to the front. In this tumult the Imām asked that the boy be brought to him. The boy was brought to the Imām while he was

¹ I did not see that place to meet with my expectations: *Ibid.*

² That was my best moment: Hujjat al-Islām Imām Jamārānī, extracted from the book ‘*Siyāreh-e Imām*’, vol. 1, p. 143.

wet with sweat and was crying out of joy. When the Imām expressed his affection for him, he asked that he wanted to kiss the Imām on the face. The Imām then lowered his face and he kissed him on one cheek and then asked to kiss his other cheek too. The Imām allowed him to do so. Finally, he asked to kiss his forehead as well. The Imām once again humbly bent his forehead and he also kissed the forehead of the Imām.¹

After all, how are the people managing?

After the victory of the Revolution and in Qum, each group that would come to meet with the Imām, the Imām would see them although they may have to wait for hours in the cold and hot weather. Many a time the Imām would go to the balcony to respond to the sentiments of the people even though it was either raining or snowing. Sometimes when it was snowing and we wanted to hold an umbrella over his head, he would state with discomfort that: “After all how are the people managing? I don’t need an umbrella.”²

You too stand in the queue like others

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, in the foremost days when the Imām arrived in Qum, on most days a large number of people would come to Qum. The guesthouses were fully booked, the restaurants packed and there were long queues at the bakeries. In Qum there was a massive crowd. There was a frail old man who served as a domestic in the house of the Imām who was called ‘Babā’. One day the Imām told him that, “I have heard that when you join the queue for bread they say that he is the servant of the Imām and ask you to go to the front of the queue and give you any number of bread loaves that you want without standing in the queue. Don’t do this. It is not right that a person goes out from this house to buy bread without observing the queue. You too stand in the queue like the others so that it is not considered a privilege for you!”³

Who has said that the people should be restrained?

After the victory of the Revolution, when the Imām arrived at a mosque in Qum to commemorate the souls of the departed, because of the huge crowd, the shoes of the Imām was missing and the turban fell off from his head and

¹ I want to kiss your forehead.

² After all, how are the people managing? Hujjat al-Islām Muḥammad ‘Alī Anṣārī, *Ibid*, p. 124.

³ You too stand in the queue like the others: Hujjat al-Islām Ḥasan Thaqafī, *Ibid*, p. 127.

were able to bring out the Imām from the throng with great difficulty. The next day that the Imām was to participate in the commemoration ceremonies in that same location we positioned a number of Revolutionary Guards beforehand in the mosque to control the situation. After the Imām arrived and the crowd increased, one of the doors was closed. After the ceremony was over, the Imām instead of getting into the waiting car joined the crowd and the people encircled him. On the way back the Imām told the late Ishrāqī and Mr. Sanā'ī that, "Who has said that the people be restrained and be kept behind closed doors? These things should not be repeated anymore."¹

I do not want an armed guard

In the first days a very great difficulty was encountered in Qum from the viewpoint of safety and security which was that the Imām would not agree that an armed revolutionary guard follow behind him. He would always say that, "I don't want an armed guard." Considering that at night the Imām would visit the homes of the martyrs and the theologians and the threat was extremely great. The residents of Qum too upon hearing that the Imām was to cross one of the streets or lanes would all pour out of their homes and gather round his car. They would even climb onto the roof of his car so that neither the driver nor the Imām could recognize where they were going. Nevertheless the Imām would state: "Nobody should follow me. The people shall guard me."²

An example of the intense affection of the Imām for the people

The Imām had private meetings with both locals and foreign officials that took place in a small and humble room. Sometimes in a single day the Imām would deliver five speeches in the courtyard of his house or inside the room. Although he would also get tired but because he had an intense affection for the people not even once did he call it a day?³

The Imām went among the people

When martyr Rajā'ī was the Minister of Education, on September 20, 1979 he took the director-generals of that ministry to Qum for a meeting with the

¹ Who has said that the people should be restrained: Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥammad 'Alī Anṣārī, *ibid*, p. 136.

² I do not want an armed guard, *ibid*, p. 144.

³ An example of the intense affection of the Imām for the people: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid*, p. 146.

Imām. All of us were seated in the small room of the Imām while the common people and supporters of the Revolution in Qum would chant slogans in the streets. Suddenly, we were told that the Imām had come. We also saw part of the outer robe of the Imām and all stood up. How much ever we waited, the Imām did not enter. Suddenly the cry of ‘God is great’ arose from the crowd followed by salutations to the Prophet and His revered Household. I asked what had happened and was told that the Imām gone in the midst of the people.¹

Approach with absolute steadfastness and happiness

In his meeting with the people and with regard to their demands as well in serving them indefatigably, the Imām never felt tired. Although many a time even the staff of the Office of the Imām would get annoyed at the insistence and unreasonable demands of some of the visitors. But the Imām in his meeting with them would confront them with absolute steadfastness and happiness. We never saw the Imām getting angry in connection with the work of people. At times the Imām would even listen to the complaints and dreams of the visitors.²

They have come here out of affection

After the victory when the Imām arrived in Qum, on most days people would come to visit him and express their feelings on the streets. There was a huge crowd. On the other side of the Qum River which lay opposite the quarters of the Imām, the massive crowd would sway like the waves of an ocean. The Imām would come on the roof and respond to the feelings of the people. Some would ask him not to come on the roof as it was dangerous for him. The people would throw packages at him to bless the contents. But the Imām would retort that they were coming here out of love. At the same time a group would say to him that: “O Imām! If you want to come on the roof allow us to go first so that we can assess the situation and then you can come.” This issue was repeated several times by Mr. Ishrāqī but the Imām paid no attention. As soon as he would hear the clamor of the crowd gathered on the street, immediately he would place the turban on his head, wear his

¹ The Imām went among the people: Kiyūmarth Šābirī (Gol Āqā), *ibid*, p. 149.

² Approach with absolute steadfastness and happiness: Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥammad ‘Alī Anšārī, *ibid*, p. 151.

slippers and go to the roof. He loved to respect the people who would come to visit him out of affection and zeal.¹

The enemies do not know about two things

After his love and affection for God and the saints, the Imām reserved the utmost affection for the people and regarded love for the people to be love of God. He would always state that, “Our enemies do not know about two things; one is Islam and the other our people.”²

The people will never be weakened

Sometimes it would happen that the widespread propaganda by the internal and external enemies about the illness of the Imām would make the rounds. Thus the Imām would be told that if he did not hold meetings or send messages, the people or the combatants on the warfronts would become dispirited to which the Imām replied: “Are the people fighting for me that they should become dispirited? They are fighting for the cause of God and Islam and will never be weakened.”³

I know the people better

Among all my friends and acquaintances I do not know of any person who had faith in the people of Iran like the Imām. In the course of the struggle he was told time and again that the people cannot tolerate the hardships of the struggle and would wilt to which the Imām would reply: “No the people are not as you are saying; I know the people better.”⁴

The newspapers do not belong to us

One day when we in the company of the representative of the Imām in the ‘*Keyhān*’ and ‘*Iṭṭilā‘āt*’ newspapers Martyr Shāhcheraghī and Mr. Du‘ā’ī went to meet with the Imām, Mr. Khātāmī who was the Minister of Islamic Guidance at that time was also present. While welcoming us he stated: “The newspapers must not be such that they print things pertaining to me and always print my photo on the front page and write about me in bold letters and main title.” Then he stated: “The newspapers do not belong to us. They

¹ They have come here out of affection: *Hujjat al-Islām Ḥasan Thaqaḥī, ibid, p. 152.*

² The enemies do not know about two things: *Āyatullāh Ṣāni‘ī, ibid, p. 117.*

³ The people will never be weakened: *Hujjat al-Islām Muḥammad ‘Alī Anṣārī.*

⁴ I know the people better: *Āyatullāh Martyr Muṭahharī, ibid.*

belong to the deprived people. They belong to the middle class.” He added saying: “If a peasant does a good job, print his photo on the first page instead of printing my photo.”¹

You go and follow the line of the people

When we went to meet the Imām together with the staff of the ‘*Jumhūrī Islāmī*’ newspaper, I said that we were very alone and the attackers are many. Because it was the beginning of the Revolution and the anti-Revolution forces were in large numbers and the smaller groups would publish hundreds of unknown publications constantly leveling charges at us. The Imām stated: “In the future of this Revolution, that person will move ahead and succeed who is with the people; who moves with the people. If you move aside, you will definitely be eliminated. You go and join the people and follow their line.” He had great faith in the people.²

Because it is not available to all people, I too will not seek refuge in bomb shelter

God is aware of how much the Imām would pray for the people in the non-obligatory midnight prayers and while shedding tears. He always wanted the welfare of the people; he always wanted the security of the people and how much he would advise the authorities to work for the people. Or perhaps how much he would counsel the authorities that we had before and at the beginning of the Revolution who was not too much concerned about the welfare of the people, to work for the people. How much he would think about the security of the people. During the war God bears witness that at the time of aerial strikes, he would not move out of his room and from near the windows. Of course because the windows had been plastered for all people, they had also plastered them for him. However, he was repeatedly asked by the authorities and by some members of the family to prepare a bomb shelter for the Imām. In reply to them the Imām would say: “If all the people have a facility that protects them from being wounded, I too will avail myself of them. But I know that all the people do not enjoy such facilities. No doubt it is right that a number of bomb shelters have been built but only a small number of people can benefit from them and because not all the people can benefit from them I will not move from my room.” I said that, “By God the

¹ The newspapers do not belong to us: Hujjat al-Islām Masīḥ Muhājerī, *ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

² You go and follow the line of the people: Engineer Mīr Ḥusayn Mūsawī: Quotations from *Siyāreh-e Imām*, vol. 1, pp. 113-114.

people themselves will be happy for your safety. Safeguard yourself for the sake of the people.”

He would say: “Yes that is one duty but this is another one. I can go to another place where I will know I am secure provided that I know all people do not have access to this.”¹

Beside the people the time of danger

One day in the afternoon about seven or eight missiles struck around Jamārān (place of residence of the Imām). I went to the Imām and said: “If suddenly one of our missiles strikes the palace of Ṣaddām and something happens to Ṣaddām, how happy we shall be, but what if a missile strikes somewhere nearby—in Jamārān—and the ceiling here comes down and something happens to you?” In reply the Imām said: “I swear by Allah I do not consider any difference and advantage between me and that soldier serving on the warfront. I swear by Allah that it makes no difference to me if I am killed or he is killed.” I told him that we know this is how he felt but it did make a difference for the people. The Imām state: “No, the people must know that if I go to a place where the bombs kill the revolutionary guards around my house and does not kill me, I will no longer be of any use for leadership of this people. I will only be able to serve the people when my living is like the living of the people. If something was to happen to the people or these revolutionary guards or those that are living here, then let it befall me as well so that people know that we all are at the side of one another.” I asked him till what time did he want to remain there. He pointed to his blessed forehead and stated: “Until the time that a missile (shrapnel) strikes me here.”²

Whenever everyone has a trench

At the time of the missile and aerial strikes and bombardment of Tehran near the place of residence of the Imām, a small trench had been built so that the Imām and his family seek shelter at the time of red alert and danger. However, under no circumstance would he enter the trench and when we why he would not enter the trench in order to be safe, he stated: “Do all people have a trench that I should also have one? Whenever, the whole

¹ Because it is not available to all people, I too will not seek refuge in a bomb shelter: Ms. Fereshteh A‘rābī, *ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

² Till the time the missile strikes me here: Ḥujjat al-Islām Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

nation has trenches will I also enter the trench.” And he would remain in that same small room.¹

You have no right to hold back the people

The Imām would constantly warn the members of the staff of his office that: “Do not behave badly with the people; you have no right to hold back the people.” One day the Imām went out of the house ahead of his daily schedule. The people were standing in throngs behind the fencings of the house of the Imām. Especially when he was to come out, they would attempt to open the doors sooner. The Imām looked around anxiously and facing me and the revolutionary guards stated firmly that “these fencings must be removed.”²

Come over whenever you wish

Everyday more than five-hundred letters would be received by the office of the Imām. Until the time when the doctors advised the Imām against reading too much, he would even read the ordinary mails. We have many letters that the Imām had replied in his own handwriting addressed to children and infants who had in their own way expressed their affections for the Imām. There are plenty of letters of this kind. Sometimes individuals both foreign and local have requested that the Imām send them his photo or autograph and the Imām ordered that photos be arranged and sent to them.³

Ask him to come in

I had a meeting with the Imām in the year 1982, when I reached the gate of the courtyard of his residence, an old man who was carrying a bag of almonds told me with a thick Turkish accent that when I meet with Imām to tell him that an old man from the town of Arasbaran has traveled a long way and wishes to see you and added that he wanted to present this bag of almonds to him. I promised that I would relay his message to the Imām. When it was my turn to meet him, Hujjat al-Islām Martyr Maḥallātī, Hujjat al-Islām Anwarī, Hujjat al-Islām Muwaḥḥidī Kermānī the representatives of the Imām in the Revolutionary Guards Corps, gendarmerie, and the State Police respectively also had an appointment with him. When the Imām told

¹ Whenever everyone has a trench: Khadem; *ibid.*

² You have no right to hold back the people: Hujjat al-Islām Muḥammad ‘Alī Anṣārī, *ibid.*, p. 135.

³ Come over whenever you wish: Hujjat al-Islām Muḥammad ‘Alī Anṣārī, *Ibid*, p. 157.

Mr. Ṣāni‘ī that at present he was tired and could not meet the officials, I thought to myself that since the Imām had not agreed to meet with his representatives as he was indisposed, then how could he agree to meet with the old man. But in any case I told him that an old man was very eager to see him. The Imām immediately stated: “Ask him to come in.” when the old man entered, the Imām warmly enquired about his health and bent himself to kiss the hands of the old man.¹

He was extremely respectful in his approach

The public relations of the Imām were so strong that despite all the problems and responsibilities that he had, at times individuals would come to him and discuss family quarrels. One day a young man came to the office of the Imām while wearing worn out clothes and being on a hunger strike asked to meet with the Imām. However much the colleagues insisted that he tell them about his problem but he refused and did not agree to end his hunger strike. He further said that the meeting must be absolutely private and if any person was to enter the room, he would stop talking. The matter was reported to the Imām. Although it was risky and dangerous that a young man without proper identity should meet with the Imām in private and alone, nevertheless the Imām accepted. This young man went to the Imām and asked a series of irrelevant questions. But although his problem was very irrelevant, yet the Imām’s attitude towards him was extremely respectful.²

Sentiments and Kindness

The old gardener

I remember I was small. One day an old man brought soil for our small garden. We were eating our food that he arrived. The Imām said that the old man had not taken lunch. Our food was not too much and so he took out a plate and put a few spoonful of his own food on the plate and told us that: “Come on each of you put a few spoonful of your own food on this plate so that it would be enough for one person.” We who did not have any extra food

¹ Ask him to come in: Muḥsin Rafiqdūst; *ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

² He was extremely respectful in his approach: Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥammad ‘Alī Anṣārī; *ibid.*, p. 161.

on that day in this way arranged a plateful of food for the old man. In childhood, I loved this act infinitely.¹

Where do you come from?

After the return of the Imām (from prison and house arrest) to Qum in 1944, a flood of admirers and enthusiasts from all over the country went to greet him at his residence in Qum. One day we were with the Imām. A rural inhabitant from one of the small towns of Khorāsān province had come to see the Imām. He was an ardent admirer and on seeing him he shed tears of joy. When the Imām saw his condition, he warmly welcomed him by his side and expressed his affection for him. Then he ordered that a cup of tea be brought for him and asked him cordially about his health and well-being in a most brotherly manner. He asked him where he came from and what his occupation was so that he felt at ease while we who were present there were greatly impressed and moved by his attitude.²

Not even once did he say “no”

The Imām had a very refined spirit. Within him he had some exceptional ethical refinements that were not observed in others.

For several years after classes, I would usually go to the residence of the Imām from Salmāsī Mosque and ask him questions which he would answer. In these several years the Imām never displayed an attitude that showed he was unwilling to answer my questions. Of course my work was not confined to just one or two days; rather on most days I would follow the Imām to his house whether it was in the first days of my participation in his lessons or whether it was the last days. Not even once did he show that he was not happy that I follow behind him to his house to seek answers to my questions.³

It was as if he was talking to his old friends

One night a group of Muslim students from Europe had come to see the Imām at the blessed shrine of the Commander of the Faithful Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (‘a). Their external appearances in our opinion were an undesirable appearance in the environment both in terms of outward facial appearance

¹ The old gardener: Khānom Farīdeh Muṣṭafawī, *ibid*, p. 182.

² Where are you from? Ḥujjat al-Islām Mahdī Karrūbī, *ibid.*, p. 147.

³ Not even once did he say ‘no’: Āyatullāh Yūsuf Ṣāni‘ī, *ibid*, vol. 3, p. 285.

and clothing as well as from the viewpoint of way of speaking and public relations. But we witnessed that the Imām spoke with them in such a manner as if he was sitting and talking to his longtime friends. They were so mesmerized by the Imām that after a few minutes of talking they stood up and went away with a world of strength, faith and hope from beside him.¹

Do not put the people under pressure

In Najaf, once it was at the beginning of the year 1968, there were reports that a group had been sent from Iran on the orders of the Shāh to assassinate the Imām. We felt it was a religious obligation to protect the Imām and thus seven or eight of the brethren decided to go to the shrine every night with the Imām and likewise, to go with him when he went to the seminary. On the first night when the Imām was coming towards the shrine, we too followed behind him. After walking a few steps, we reached the end of the lane. The Imām turned back and asked us to return. Of course on that night we held back ourselves and the Imām went to the shrine. But later we sent a message to the Imām that we felt we had a religious obligation and whether he liked it or not, we would follow him behind because we considered it a mandatory religious duty upon ourselves and continued to keep him guard. On the nights when the shrine was extremely crowded, the Iranians that would arrive there for pilgrimage would crowd round the Imām to kiss his hand and the Imām would feel under pressure of the crowd. We would be present there to keep the way open. It occurred many a time that the Imām would say in the midst of the crowd that: “Do not put the people under pressure”—and he would push us aside so that the people would be free and the people were not disrespected.²

If there is a danger then why it should not be for me?

In Paris, for security reasons, I would first open the letters and then take them to the Imām for reading. Once when I was busy opening the letters in the kitchen, the Imām entered and said: “I am not acquiescence.” I thought perhaps he was anxious that I should not read the letters. I said: “I swear by your ancestors that that I do not read the letters and only open them so that there is no problem.” The Imām said: “I know; this is what I am saying too. If there is a danger then why it should not be for me and it should be for you.” I said: “O Imām, the people of Iran are waiting for you. He replied:

¹ It was as if he was talking to his longtime friends: Āyatullāh Karīmī, *ibid.*, p. 255.

² Do not put the people under pressure: Hujjat al-Islām Muhtashamī-Pūr, *ibid.*, p. 127.

“But at least eight children are waiting for you back in Iran.” I said: “Don’t worry, I have been trained and there is no danger.” He then said: “Well, then set aside an hour to teach me how to open these letters so that if there is any danger, it is eliminated.”¹

I came to help you (with the dish-washing)

One day accidentally the number of guests in the house of the Imām had increased. After serving food and clearing the table, I noticed that the Imām came inside the kitchen. Because it was time for his performing ablutions, I asked: “Why has the Imām come into the kitchen?” The Imām stated: “Because today the number of utensils are too many, I have come to help you.” This is the extent to which the Imām observed the rights and circumstances of others.²

I came to help you

In Neauphle le-Château, Mrs. Dabbāgh played a prominent role and beside other numerous tasks she would also help in the kitchen with the cooking and dish-washing. We would at times go to her to converse and have discussions with her. On one of the days that she was slightly indisposed and was washing the dishes in that state, I went to see her. I felt she was anxious and asked her why she was disconsolate. She replied: “I could not believe it that when I was washing the dishes, the Imām entered and told me that, ‘Sister (the Imām would address her ‘sister’) I have come to help you; allow me to wash the dishes.’” Mrs. Dabbāgh was profoundly overcome with emotions by this attitude of the Imām that for example, a person of his greatness and preoccupation should come into the kitchen and speak to her in that fashion.³

He would call me ‘sister’

In Neauphle le-Château I was in the service of the Imām for four months and sixteen days. Sometimes they would ask me to contact so and so pastor and mention the subject of the Revolution or have a discussion with such and such journalist. I also heard from one of the beloved members of his family

¹ If there is a danger then why it should not be for me? Mrs. Dabbāgh; *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 111.

² I have come to help you: Mrs. Ṭabāṭabā’ī: *Mirror of Virtue*, p. 127.

³ I have come to help you (with the dishwashing): Mrs. Dabbāgh, *ibid.*

that in my absence, he would out of kindness and affection call me ‘Sister Taherreh’ which I consider to be an honor and favor from God.¹

Which food is yours?

In Paris one day when the family of the Imām was guests at the house of one of their friends, the Imām stated that both Āyatullāh Muṭahharī and Āyatullāh Ṣadūqī should take lunch with him. I took three bowls of “*Ābgūshī*” (meat boiled in water with pulses) that was the customary meal to them and thought that I myself would go to the other building and as was usual eat bread, cheese and tomatoes that was the customary food there. When I took the meals, he asked, “Which food is yours?” I could never lie and told him that, “You please take your meal; I will go later to the other building and eat something.” He stated, “Go and bring a bowl.” I took another bowl and he divided the three meals into four and gave one of them to me.”²

I stayed awake that night

The night when a group of Iranians came to France to meet the Imām, there was a small room behind his room where I would always sleep. That night when there was shortage of space for sleeping, I handed over that room to the guests and for this reason I slept in the kitchen. When the Imām came to know of this, he stated, “Because you were sleeping in the kitchen and it was likely that you would catch cold, I stayed awake the whole night.”³

Manifestation of kindness

Sometimes when it was raining and snowing in Paris and the Imām would rise up to say his mandatory prayers, on returning from prayers his shoes would be soiled and dirty. I liked to clean his shoes by wiping off the mud on the shoes. When the Imām came to know of this, he took care to ensure that his shoes were not soiled and dirty so that I was not inconvenienced even a bit.”⁴

¹ He would call me ‘sister’: Mrs. Dabbāgh, Extracted from “Biography of Imām Khomeinī” vol. 2, p. 201.

² Which food is yours? Mrs. Dabbāgh, *ibid*.

³ I stayed awake that night: Mrs. Dabbāgh, *ibid*, p. 202.

⁴ Manifestation of kindness: Mrs. Dabbāgh, *ibid*.

Gift on the night of the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ (Christmas)

On the night of Christmas, the Imām sent a message for all the Christians of the world which the news agencies broadcast. Beside this message he instructed us to distribute gifts that the brethren had brought from Iran—normally consisting of traditional sweets, pistachios and dried fruits and nuts among the residents of Neuphle le-Château. We did this and placed a flower beside every gift package. When we visited some of the homes, we felt that it was extremely astonishing for them that on the night of Christmas, an Iranian leader who was a non-Christian was so close to them and felt so much affection for them. In particular there was a woman who when she accepted the Imām's gift became so excited that tears of joy rolled down her cheeks. This gesture of the Imām had such an impact on her that she asked for an appointment with the Imām. The Imām without a moment of hesitation agreed to an appointment. There were ten to fifteen of the local residents each of whom came holding a flower. The Imām asked the translator to enquire how they were and if they had any special needs or work with him. They replied in the negative saying that they only wanted to see the Imām from close and had brought these flowers as gift. With a smile the Imām accepted the flowers from each one of them and placed them in a vase that was within his reach and they departed extremely happy.¹

There must be no inconvenience for the neighbors

Due to the presence of a large crowd and constant coming and going, the Imām emphasized that there should be no movement or behavior that would inconvenience the neighbors who were all Christians. In reality, the Imām was extremely careful and strict in relation to observance of the well-being and relaxation of his neighbors lest the neighbors be bothered and inconvenienced by the crowd or the stream of visitors to his residence. This observance and behavior resulted in all the residents of Neauphle le-Château and the neighborhood to become extremely sorrowful when the Imām wanted to return to Iran. For this reason a number of them gave the Imām a quantity of the soil of France to take with him as souvenir.²

¹ Gift on the night of Christmas: Mrs. Dabbāgh; *ibid.*

² There must be no inconvenience for the neighbors: Hujjat al-Islām Muhtashamī-Pūr, *ibid.*, p. 203.

Apologize to the neighbors

After the departure from Paris and travel to Iran of the Imām became certain, the Imām instructed me to go the houses of the neighbors in Neauphle le-Château and to apologize to them on his behalf because of the inconvenience caused to them during the period of his residence. I together with Mr. Ishrāqī and one or two others went to visit all the neighbors of that village and relayed the message of the Imām to them and apologized to them on behalf of the Imām.¹

Don't do something so that you cannot be answerable to the people

Once there was a discussion in connection with matters of foreign policy that required some covert diplomatic actions. The Imām was consulted and he stated: “Do not do something by which you cannot be answerable to the people.” A person must be involved in policy implementation to understand the enormity of these words. From the start of the political life of the Imām until the end one could not find any contradiction in the matters that he would state from the past and the future and neither in his covert and overt decisions.²

I apologize

The Imām was humble even in his conduct with protégés and those that were from very low academic and social standing. About eight years ago I was in the province of Āzarbāyjān in summer. The Imām summoned me on an important issue that pertained to Āzarbāyjān. After starting the discussion, he addressed me stating that: “I apologize to you for the trouble you have taken to come here.” This statement had such a profound effect on me that my eyes were filled with tears.³

This child is closer to the Court of God

The Imām loved the person that was closer to God. For example, he was very fond of children. When he would kiss his grandson ‘Alī, he would say: “This child is a new covenant and is cherubic; this child is closer to the Origin. This child is purer than others.” If he loved children it was because they were

¹ Apologize to the neighbors: Ḥujjat al-Islām Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid*.

² Don't do something so that you cannot be answerable to the people: Mīr Ḥusayn Mūsawī, *ibid*, vol. 3, p. 261.

³ I apologize: Āyatullāh Banī-Fāḍil; *ibid*, p. 245.

closer to God. There was no need for him to express his feelings. His hatred and love was spontaneous and was for the sake of God.¹

Leave the child alone

One day I went with my son Hamed who was four years old to see the Imām. The Imām was seated in a room and a big gunny bag that was half-filled with paper and letters was placed at his side. The Imām would take out the letters one by one and read them. He put those that needed to be answered under the blanket so that later he would answer them while he kept keep aside the rest. We greeted him and sat down. The Imām began to talk with Ḥāmid. For example he asked him the name of his father or whether he knew my name. After a moment, Ḥāmid started to play with the Imām. I asked for his permission to leave so that my child did not inconvenience him. The Imām said: Leave the child alone; if you have some work to do then you may leave.” I did so. After about half an hour, I thought perhaps the child was inconveniencing the Imām and returned to take him away. I saw that he had placed his head on the knees of the Imām and his feet rested against the wall while he was talking with the Imām and was telling him to arrange the papers properly and keep them clean and so forth... while the Imām was smiling and enjoying every moment. I asked Hamed to come with me but he refused. I told the Imām: “Will you permit me to take him away.” The Imām replied: “No, the child is not inconveniencing me; you can go.”²

Sympathy for his own opponents

One day in the company of Ḥujjat al-Islām wa'l-Muslimīn Salīmī, who on behalf of the household of the Imām had arrived at the frontline in the South in order to visit and boost the morale of the defendants of Islam, the discussion turned to the behavioral characteristics of the Imām. He remarked that some days ago in the presence of the Imām, the snide remarks and insults unleashed by Shaykh ‘Alī Tehrānī and broadcast from Baghdad Radio were brought to the notice of the Imām and he was told that this mischievous man was being very insulting to him. When their conversation ended the Imām stated: “Incidentally, a few days ago I was remembering him and

¹ This child is closer to the Court of God: Ms. Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā’ī; *ibid.*, p. 188.

² Leave the child alone: ‘Alī Thaqaṭī, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 192.

prayed for him.” The Imām was to this extent sympathetic and concerned even in relation to his opponents and enemies.¹

Did you hear the sound of the bell ringing?

For a long time I would sleep with the Imām when my mother was away traveling. He would say that it was not necessary for me to sleep beside him because my sleep was easily disturbed and this bothered him. Even the alarm clock that was for his waking up, I saw him wrap it inside something and take it two rooms further away so that when it would ring, I would not wake up. Midnight I was awake but did not show it and pretended to be asleep because he wanted to recite the non-mandatory midnight prayers. Next morning in order to see whether I was awake or not told me: “Did you hear the ring of the alarm clock?” I did not want to tell the truth or to lie and retorted: “Was the clock in your room that I should wake up?” he also came to know that I was acting clever and said: “Answer me first. Did you wake up to the ring of the alarm clock?” I was compelled to say yes agreeing that I was probably awake because the ring of the alarm clock was really very distant and very low. It was there that he stated: “you must no longer sleep in my room because I am always concerned that you will wake up.” I replied that I especially wanted somebody to sleep in your room. (It was the time when he had suffered from a heart problem and had arrived in Tehran). We want someone to sleep in your room so that he wakes up if there is any inconvenience for you. He stated: “No, go and ask your daughter Laylā to come to my room. After some days had passed he said: “It is no longer necessary for Laila also to sleep here because she puts away the blanket from her body and I am always compelled to wake up and cover her body with it.”²

Why has he cut off ties with us?

One day one of the friends who had an appointment with the Imām because of the unsavory attitude of a novice individual among the security guards, became angry and returned. However at the very first moments that we met with the Imām, he enquired about that person and was informed about the incident. Immediately with a wry yet affectionate smile he stated: “If somebody else has caused him discomfort why has he cut off ties with us?”

¹ Sympathy for his opponents: Ghulām ‘Alī Rajā’ī, *ibid.*, p. 209.

² Did you hear the ring of the alarm clock? Mrs. Zahrā Muṣṭafawī; *ibid.*, pp. 193-194.

He too when he was informed of the expression of affection of the Imām was deeply touched.¹

I often look at the children

The Imām was extremely affectionate and kind and he was especially very fond of children. With a small child he would behave just like a child and would say: “When I go to the ‘Ḥusayniyyahs’ (place of eulogizing and sermonizing for Imām Ḥusayn (‘a) I often look at the children.” At times when he would see that the children were suffering because of the pressure from the crowd and the heat, he would say: “I feel extremely concerned when I see them being brought to the ‘Ḥusayniyyahs’ under such deplorable conditions. They are harmed and are inconvenienced.” The Imām loved children of martyrs as much as his own children if I dare to say even more than his own children.²

The Imām’s sympathy for children of martyrs

One day I was in Jamārān when the Imām had just settled in Jamārān. It was the beginning of the war and among the visitors who came to see the Imām was a young woman who had recently lost her husband and was accompanied with her daughter too who was a few years old. The daughter was extremely restless and had been crying since morning while her entire head and face was soiled and tears trickled down her cheeks. Her mother was anxious and wanted to take this child to the Imām by any means so that he would calm the child that had lost her father. She said that she was least concerned that her husband was martyred because she herself had made supported the idea and made arrangements for his departure to the warfront. But now what troubled her was her child and that she thought that the only solution was for the Imām to console her. My brother then took the child and brought her to the Imām. The Imām was walking in the courtyard and we expected him that as soon as he set his eyes on the child he would run his hand over her and then we would take her back to her mother. However, when he saw this crying and yelling girl, he sat down on the stone beside the pool and took the child in his arms and ran his hands lovingly and affectionately over her head and face and wiped off her tears. He was

¹ Why has he cut off ties with us? Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān; *ibid.*, p. 195.

² He would often look at the children: Mrs. Na‘īmah Ishrāqī; *Ibid.*, pp. 195-196.

engrossed with this child for quite some time and later when the child calmed down he let her go and we returned her to her mother.¹

Come and let us converse together

Once an acquaintance came to the house and because he was angry at some issue, he spoke loudly while making his statements. The Imām although he was recuperating from his illness calmly and affectionately stated to him that, “Why are you angry? Now come and let us converse with one another; we will finally come to a conclusion.”²

This is also for your mom!

At the time when I was commander of the ‘*Komīteh*’ of the Revolution, on the day of the Feast of *Ghadīr*, the Imām had a meeting with the authorities in the Ḥusayniyyah and after the conclusion of his speech, he returned with them and sat on the chair that was placed at the entrance of his room and the authorities went to meet him. At the side of the Imām was a bowl filled with one rial coins as souvenirs. With a radiant face that was brimming with joy, the Imām responded to our greetings and with his right hand he picked a few coins and gives it to the authorities as gift. He also gave me one. I who never had enough of him again joined the queue and kissed his hand and received the souvenir coin from him. The third time the Imām noticed me at the end of the queue and gave me a smile. O Imām please give one for my mom (who was ill and I wanted a coin with the intent of blessing and cure for her from him). While displaying a sweet smile, the Imām put a few of the remaining coins from the bowl into my hands and in a genial and kind tone stated jovially that, “Take this for your mom!”³

We are greatly indebted to them

I told the Imām that many of the surviving families—of the bombed regions—still have feelings for the Revolution; they still express their support and still say they are ready to defend till the last breath and to confront the enemy. But well you also have a duty. So this is either their present conviction or just their empty saying. The Imām stated: “they are

¹ The Imām’s sympathy for the children of martyrs: ‘Alī Thaqafī; *ibid*, p. 196.

² Come let us converse together: Mrs. Zahrā Muṣṭafawī; *ibid*.

³ Take this for your mom! Ḥujjat al-Islām Aḥmad Sālik Kāshānī; *ibid*, p. 287.

telling the truth; we are greatly indebted to them.” Tears flowed down from his eyes and he wept bitterly.¹

Tears began to form around his eyes

One of the officials traveled to the provincial town of Masjid-e Sulaymān in connection with the missile strikes of Ṣaddām. On return, quoting the Friday Prayer Leader of that town, he told the Imām that in the course of the missile strike by Iraq on Masjid-e Sulaymān, that left a number of people martyred and wounded after long hours when the debris was still being cleared and search was going on for the dead and injured, a small child who had miraculously remained alive was brought out of the debris. He was wounded and covered with dirt and dust. Spontaneously in a loud voice before saying anything else he shouted: “War, war until victory” and “O God! O God! Keep Khomeinī alive until the Revolution of the Savior Mahdī.” The Imām was listening intently to the report and was looking at the speaker. As the speaker began to narrate the latter part of the subject, although the Imām’s solidity of countenance concealed the inner emotions, but the profound effect on him revealed itself on his cherubic countenance so that tears began to form around his eyes.²

Suddenly the expression of the Imām changed

A woman in Tabrīz told me that her son had been taken prisoner of war by the Iraqis and recently she had heard that her POW son had been martyred. She said that she had come to ask me to tell the Imām not to be worried about our children and that for them the wellbeing of the Imām was important. When I mentioned this to the Imām, his expression changed and his eyes filled with tears. Seeing the Imām facial expression made me sorrowful.³

He was always wearing a smile on his face

The Imām was extremely strong in his convictions. Whenever we would meet him he would be wearing a smile on his face.⁴

¹ We are greatly indebted to them: Āyatullāh Mahdawī Kanī, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 133.

² Tears began to form around his eyes: Hujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān, *ibid.*

³ Suddenly the facial expression of the Imām changed: Āyatullāh Khāmene’ī; *ibid*, vol. 2, p. 224.

⁴ He was always wearing a smile on his face: Security Guard of the Household of the Imām; *ibid*, vol. 3, p. 284.

He would always be smiling

I still do not recall entering the room of the Imām and not seeing him smiling.¹

He recounted the event with bitterness

The Imām loved the people. The night when the incident in Behbahān occurred when a primary school was bombed by the Iraqī warplanes, a large number of pupils were martyred. We were seated in a room that the Imām entered. His first words were reference to the Behbahān incident. He recounted this incident with such bitterness and grief as if it had occurred for his own son. The Imām did not shed tears when his son was martyred but he shed tears repeatedly for the children of the people.²

Let her to take lunch

One day we went to an orchard with ‘Alī (the Imām’s grandson). One of the security guards had a small girl who was present there. ‘Alī insisted that we take the girl to the Imām. It was lunchtime when we took her to the Imām. The Imām told ‘Alī that, “Ask your friend to sit down for lunch.” He too put down the child to eat lunch. We went two or three times to take away the child so that he was not inconvenienced but he insisted, “let her take her lunch.” After the child had eaten her lunch, we went and brought her back. The Imām presented her with a gift of 500 tomans (50.00 US \$ at that time). Yes, the Imām had great love for children and was extremely kind to them. Not only was he in this manner towards ‘Alī, rather, he loved all children.³

Display of Affection

I shall stay with you

My father was the bodyguard of Āqā Muṣṭafā (father of the Imām) and naturally our family also resided in the vicinity of the house of Āqā Muṣṭafā. My mother delivers a child who dies immediately after birth. The paternal aunt of the Imām tells my father that she had heard that his child had died in infancy. Moreover, because the mother of Rūḥullāh (the Imām) could not breastfeed him, it would be an act of spiritual reward if Khāvar breastfeeds

¹ He would always be smiling: Na‘īmah Ishrāqī, *ibid*.

² He recounted the incident with bitterness: Āyatullāh Khāmene‘ī, *ibid*, vol. 1, p. 130.

³ Let her to take lunch: Ḥāj ‘Īsā Ja‘farī, *ibid*, vol. 2, pp. 187-188.

him and saves the life of the child. My father tells her that he must take the permission of his wife and returns home and says to his wife Khavar that: “Khāvar! Āqā’s sister says that if you don’t allow the milk in your breasts to dry and agree to breast feed Rūḥullāh, you will earn a great spiritual reward.” My mother laughs and says: “Yes in that case my breasts shall not burn in the fire of hell.” Then my father goes and tells the paternal aunt of the Imām about her agreement. Immediately they bring the cradle of Āqā Rūḥullāh to our house. When they bring Āqā Rūḥullāh, my mother got up and went and washed her breasts, recited the *Sūrahs ‘Fātiḥah’* and *‘Tawḥīd’*, kisses his face and begins to breastfeed him. Rūḥullāh’s father tells my mother that, “I request you that as long as you are breastfeeding my child, you should not eat food from other people” and everyday he would send her meals and foodstuffs so that my mother only ate the foods sent by him. Rūḥullāh was breastfed for two years. After two years when his breastfeeding was stopped and he was taken to his own home, yet he would still be drawn towards my mother. My mother would laugh and my father would say: “Dear Rūḥullāh, now that you are not being breastfed, why don’t you go back to your house?” He replied: “I shall stay with you.”¹

Of the most difficult nights in the life of the Imām

The night when they shifted the Imām to a solitary confinement cell in the prison, the agents of the Shāh’s regime would torture the Imām mentally by torturing an inmate in the cell facing his. His cries and sobs rent the air. The Imām made a divine covenant so that they would stop torturing that inmate. Later he stated to me that: “That night was the most difficult night of my life.”²

He was full of affection

The Imām was a world of affection. His look was so full of affection and consoling that whenever we would be faced with unhappiness or problem, we would involuntarily go to meet with him. When he would respond to our greeting I can say with certainty that we would forget all our problems.³

¹ I shall stay with you: Behjat Khānom (daughter of the nursing mother of the Imām); *ibid*, vol. 1, p. 181.

² Of the most difficult nights in the life of the Imām: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid*: vol. 2, p. 215.

³ He was full of affection: Mrs. Freshteh A’rābī, *ibid.*, p. 189.

The Imām is intensely emotional

The Imām is intensely emotional. For example when he was in the city of Najaf, and sometimes my sisters would visit us there, when it was time for them to return to Iran, I could never bring myself to stand in the courtyard to see the Imām bid them farewell—I would simply leave the scene. My late brother would also say the same thing that I could simply not see the moment when they bid farewell. Because the Imām was so emotionally attached to his children, they could not bear to see it. However, the intense affection and emotion did not have the least impact on his decision-making or in his work.¹

If somebody was to fall sick

The Imām had an intense affection for his wife, children, grandchildren and even his acquaintances. Even if one of the members of his staff was taken ill, he would constantly enquire about his health; advise treatment and visiting the physician and regularly enquire about his condition and would enjoin visits to the hospital.

One day Hāj Aḥmad Āqā had gone somewhere and was reading the Imām's message while the Imām was listening to his speech on the radio. Before the message he had said that on that day he was not in good health. The Imām inquired about his health and why he had fallen ill.²

The Imām was enquiring about you

When Āyatullāh Khātāmī, my father-in-law died, I went to Yazd to participate in the mourning ceremonies. My mother would constantly tell me that the Imām was very eager to know about me and was unhappy that I was away and wanted to see me and express his condolences so that my soul became calm. When I reached Tehran, he immediately called and sent a message that Zahrā should go immediately as he wanted to see her. This was very remarkable for me that the Imām despite all the problems was still concerned about his family and wanted to offer condolences to his grandchild. The Imām was never indifferent to any affair.³

¹ The Imām is intensely emotional: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*

² If somebody was to fall sick: Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥammad 'Alī Anṣārī; *ibid.*, pp. 189-190.

³ The Imām was enquiring about you: Mrs. Zahrā Ishrāqī; *ibid.*

Attention to small issues

A characteristic trait of the Imām was his comprehensive personality. While he paid attention to the big issues, he would also not forget the smaller ones. For example, if he would come across a person who had once upon a time done a service to him, he would enquire both about his condition as well as that of his family and children; and if one of them had got recently married, he would also enquire about their children.¹

I ask to be forgiven

The night before the day when the Imām was to depart from Paris for Tehran which was postponed for a later date, the residents of Neauphle le-Château carrying large number of bouquets even Christian women who did not believe in the ‘*hijāb*’ covering, had donned scarves and come to meet the Imām. That night the Christian inhabitants had an extraordinary condition—all of them were sobbing. The great leader of the Islamic Revolution in a very brief speech, asked his neighbors for forgiveness stating: “I ask to be forgiven. In this period that I was staying here, I caused a lot of headaches for you.” After the interpreter had translated the speech of the Imām, the residents of Neauphle le-Château broke down and cried.²

I have become a source of inconvenience for you

On February 1, 1979 when the Imām was due to visit the Refāh School, but because of the huge crowd he went to the home of one of his relatives. However around 10 p.m. when he entered the Refāh School, the pupils were stunned with disbelief on seeing the Imām in front of them. He spoke a little for the children and went to his room. From then on, I was with the Imām in the ‘Alawī School and at times had the honor of security control of the area around his room. One of the best moments of my life was when at midnight, the Imām got ready to perform ablutions and prepare for the dawn prayer. The door of the Imām’s room opened and I who hailed from a family of clergymen and was reared in the household of a clergy had never ever seen such a disciplined man of religion who at midnight came out wearing his turban, beard combed and sleeves neatly folded to perform ablutions. Suddenly, on seeing him, I was spellbound and greeted him. The Imām prayed and then stated: “I have become a source of inconvenience for you.” I

¹ Attention to small issues: ‘Abbās Khorāsānī, *ibid*, vol. 2, p. 206.

² I ask to be forgiven: Hādī Ghaffāri, *ibid*., vol. 3, p. 244.

replied that on the contrary he was a blessing for thirty-six million people of Iran. He prayed for me and that prayer always rings in my ears.¹

Do you know how much affection I have for you?

One two or three occasions when I had the opportunity to meet with him, he expressed his affection for me that I myself felt honored and elated. During one of these visits, while firmly holding my hand in his, he confessed, “Do you know how much affection I have for you.”²

I long to see Dr. Chamrān

One day Ḥāj Aḥmad Āqā called the Command Headquarters for Guerrilla Warfare in Ahwāz from the Imām’s Office and said that the Imām had mentioned that he longed to see Dr. Chamrān and that he come to Tehran.

On hearing this message, Dr. Chamrān who was in those days wounded in the leg in the Susangerd warfront, came to Tehran to meet with the Imām. In his presence, we took the maps and charts of the area of operation to the Imām. Dr. Chamrān who was wounded in the leg and could not fold his knees but out of respect for the Imām who had expressed his affection for him, he folded his knees in front of him and while he had to tolerate a lot of pain, he began to give detailed account and explanation of the maps. With the unique sagacity that he was gifted with, the Imām came to know of the pain and discomfort of Dr. Chamrān and stated: “Dr. Chamrān, stretch out your legs and be comfortable.” Dr. Chamrān replied that he was comfortable. The Imām insisted: “I say stretch out your legs.” Out of respect for the Imām, Dr. Chamrān did not agree and insisted that he was not feeling any discomfort. In an unusual tone the Imām repeated himself twice stating: “I say stretch out your legs out and be comfortable.” Right away Dr. Chamrān agreed. After the meeting had ended, the Imām who was preparing to go to the Jamārān Ḥusayniyyah to meet with the people, called out to his son Ḥāj Aḥmad Āqā who was standing in the middle of the courtyard. However, Ḥāj Aḥmad Āqā who was inside the courtyard could not hear the Imām. So from inside the room I called out to him and told him that the Imām wanted to talk to him. When Ḥāj Aḥmad Āqā came to the Imām, the Imām stated to him that: “With

¹ I have become a source of inconvenience for you: Aḥmad Nāṭiq Nūrī: *Ibid.*

² Do you know how much affection I have for you: Major General Qāsim ‘Alī Zāhīr-Nejād, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 204.

his injured leg, Mr. Chamrān cannot pass through these tables that you have arranged here. Remove them from here and open the way.”¹

Laughter in the bosom of the Imām

One day an Italian woman who was a teacher by profession and was a Christian sent a letter full of expressions of affection and admiration for the Imām and his political doctrine along with a gold necklace. She mentioned in her letter that the gold necklace was a wedding gift and thus she held a special love for it and was presenting it to him as a sign of her affection and admiration for him. We kept it for some time and finally with hesitation in regard to its acceptance by the Imām we took it to him together with the translation of the letter. When the letter was handed to him, he also took the necklace and kept it on the table next to himself. Two or three days later, incidentally a small two or three year old girl was brought in his presence whose father was missing in action on the warfront. The Imām immediately asked that she be brought in his presence. Then he made her to sit on his knees and rubbed his blessed face with the face of the child and ran his hand over her head—something that was unprecedented even in relation to his own children. For a long time in that same position he kept speaking softly with the child and although we were at a distance of less than a meter and half from him, yet we could not hear him very well. The child who was initially depressed finally began to laugh in the bosom of the Imām. Then the Imām took the necklace that the Italian woman had sent to him and with his blessed hands, put it around the neck of the small child. The child who was overcome with happiness left the presence of the Imām and went out.²

You were not present in Ābādān

During the war, very week the Friday congregation prayer would be broadcast by the IRIB. For some time due to indisposition and travel, I did not hold the Friday congregation prayer for about one month. On returning from my journey, I went to see the Imām accompanied with the Friday prayer leaders of Khūzestān province. He stated to me: “You were not present in Ābādān for some days; where had you gone?”³

¹ I long to see Dr. Chamran: As narrated by Hāj Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī: *ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

² Laughter in the bosom of the Imām, Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān, *ibid.*, p. 216.

³ 13- You were not present in Ābādān: Ḥujjat al-Islām Jāmī (Friday prayer leader of Ābādān); *ibid.*: vol.4, p. 286.

We decided to give you advice

Letter written by school girls of a primary school to the Imām and his reply:

In the Name of God the Beneficent, the Merciful

Peace to the beloved Imām; we are the fifth grade students of the Fāṭimiyah Jihād School. Because in our religious text book Imām Muḥammad Taqī ('a) wrote a letter to the Commander of Sistan province and gave him recommendations, we too decided to write you a letter and to give you advise. But O Imām, we cannot give you advice because you are honorable and are far removed from all sins. O Imām, we small children want to make a request to you from the bottom of our hearts and hope to be deserving of it. First is that O our honorable father! O the wise sage of Jamārān! O the spirit of God! Please write to us in your own beautiful handwriting and give us advice...

With peace and blessings of God

In reply, the Imām wrote as follows: "O my beloved children! I have read your warm letter. How I wish you my beloved would advise me who is in need of your advice. I hope that you study your lessons well in a spirit of joy and with the same spirit perform your Islamic duties that develops human beings. You must be of good moral behavior and regard obedience and serving your parents as a blessing and favor and make them to be content with you. Accord respect to your teachers and try to be useful for Islam, the Islamic Republic and your country. I pray to the Almighty and Exalted God for the health, happiness and progress in both theory and practice of my beloved children. Peace to all of you.

Rūḥullāh al-Mūsawī al-Khomeinī¹
Ṣafar 29, 1403 A.H.
Humility

I kissed his hand

After the demise of Āyatullāh Ḥā'irī, the Imām never attended the classes of anybody and began to teach. For completion of the stages of jurisprudence and principles of religion, he would hold joint discussions and debates with the prominent theologians of the seminary. For years he participated in the

¹ We decide to give you advice: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān, *ibid*, vol. 2, p. 217.

joint debates and discussions held by late Āyatullāh Ṣadr and Āyatullāh Zanjānī and once stated that: “On one of the days of debate, a fierce argument took place between me and Āyatullāh Zanjānī. Because of the elder status and greatness of the late Zanjānī, I kissed his hand.”¹

I am only a clergyman

On the very first day of the arrival of the Imām in Karaj, Ḥujjat al-Islām Ḥāj Shaykh Ḥusayn Lankarānī came to visit him. When he was being ushered in, he said: “I don’t deserve to kiss your hands; allow me to kiss your feet instead...” and again repeated his complaint that: You have come without informing and without protocol and we assert our disapproval with this manner and approach.” The Imām retorted: “I am only a clergyman and do not deserve such a protocol.”²

In the company of the seminary students

In the year 1955, during the mourning ceremony was being held at the residence of the Supreme Āyatullāh Borūjerdī to commemorate the anniversary of the martyrdom of Her Holiness Fāṭimah Zahrā (‘a). I noticed the Imām sitting in the midst of average seminary students a little further away from the late Borūjerdī with absolute humility and etiquette. At this ceremony the late Torbati was delivering sermon. Throughout this period when we were attending the ceremonies, we saw the Imām sitting cross legged and with absolute composure listening to the sermon right from the beginning to the end of the session. I wondered why he did not sit close to the late Borūjerdī and like an ordinary listener he would sit with humility in the company of young and little-known seminary students despite being a distinguished and revered figure of the theological school.³

They poured two buckets of water on me

The son of the fourth martyr at the altar—His Holiness Āyatullāh Ashrafī Iṣfahānī—narrates that when he was fifteen years old, one day he had gone to a public bath in Qum. At the entrance he noticed that one of the men had lathered his head with soap and his eyes were also covered with the lather and was probing with his hands for a bucket. Immediately he picks up a

¹ I kissed his hand: Āyatullāh Subḥānī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 242-243.

² I am only a clergyman: Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥammad Fāḍilī Eshtehārdī; *ibid.*, p. 246.

³ In the company of seminary students: Muḥammad Bāqir Torbatī; *ibid.*, pp. 238-239.

bucket that was near him, fills it with water from the pool and pours two buckets of water on the man. That radiant man gives him a look of gratitude and asks whether he too had washed his head to which he replies in the negative adding that he had just come to the bath. Finally, he goes to a corner and soaps his head and face. Before he could pour water over his head, suddenly two buckets of water pours over him. He opens his eyes and notices that the distinguished figure had in return reciprocated his gesture and poured the water over his head. He goes and narrates the tale to his father but because he did not know his name he could not identify the man by name. Some time later the son goes along with his father to a religious feast held at the home of theologians that suddenly he notices that man and tells his father about his presence. His father is amazed and tells his son that the man was Hāj Āqā Rūḥullāh Khomeinī.”¹

You did not give me permission

The prominent theologians have narrated to me that the late Borūjerdī did not regard it permissible to emulate the instructions of a dead theologian and opined that a person must emulate a living theologian. Two distinguished religious scholars of that time, the late Āyatullāh Yathribī who was a theologian from the province of Kashan and was a protégé of the late Āqā Diyā ‘Arāqī who was a prominent scholar of Najaf and the Imām would argue with him in order to convince him. The late Yathribī started the discussion but Āqā Borūjerdī was not convinced. The Imām was sitting very quiet and well-behaved. It was the Imām’s approach that one should not answer unless one is asked a question. The late Borūjerdī turned towards the Imām and said: “Sir, are you not going to say something?” The Imām stated: “You did not give me permission.” After the Imām had finished speaking, Āqā Borūjerdī accepted the idea of the Imām.²

Islam does not depend on me

After the passing away of the late Grand Āyatullāh Borūjerdī, one day one of the friends and students of the Imām suggested to me that I should go to the Imām so that perhaps I could obtain his permission to print his practical treatise. It was early morning that we entered the extroversive yard of the Imām’s house. The Imām was sitting on a mattress. My friend spoke about the need of our modern society for the presence of a man of religion such as

¹ He poured two buckets of water on me: Muḥammad Ashrafī Iṣfahānī: *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 242.

² You did not give me permission: Sayyid Kamāl Faqīh Īmānī; *ibid.*, p. 249.

him. Out of zeal, affection and conviction, my friend uttered a phrase that had some exaggeration in it. I remember that suddenly the face of the Imām turned crimson and he stated: “It is not as if Islam depends on me.”¹

Greetings of Peace to you, O Imām!

The Imām was extremely fond of people. He despised situations that created a superior being out of him and would prevent such situations. On the route he took along the Ark Lane there was a provision store whose proprietor was a person by the name of Hāj Ghulām. One day this person was sitting outside his store on a tin can under the shelter of a wall. He placed one foot over the other and was holding a chain in his hand which he kept rotating. When the Imām reached his shop he greeted Hāj Ghulām. He did not recognize us and in the same state that he was in with foot placed on one another and rotating the chain, he replied: “Peace on you, are you fine?”²

He would answer the greeting of one and all

Despite the state of anger and belligerence that the Imām portrayed vis-à-vis the regime in power at that time; and despite the daily clashes and difficulties, I can never recall the Imām not responding to the greeting of peace of one of the children. The Imām would cast a look at each and every one of the children and while having a ready smile on his face, he would reply to the greetings of one and all.³

He even greeted children

The Imām always took the initiative in greeting others and always whenever he would meet individuals, he greeted them before they greeted him. The Imām with that greatness that all the powers were horrified at hearing his name was so kind and compassionate that even when he came across children, he greeted them.⁴

¹ Islam doesn't depend on me: Āyatullāh Tawassulī; *ibid.*, p. 230.

² Greetings of peace, O Imām! Āyatullāh Mūsawī Khoeynīhā; *ibid.*, p. 239.

³ He would reply to the greeting of one and all: Ḥusayn Shāhrzād (the Imām's neighbor in Qum); *ibid.*, p. 239.

⁴ He even greeted children: Dr. Maḥmūd Borūjerdī; *ibid.*, p. 240.

Not even once did I succeed to take the initiative in greeting the Imām

What will never be erased from the memory of the students of the Imām; rather from the memory of those around him was the extreme humility and spirit of rearing students of the Imām. In addition to being his student, I was mesmerized by his personality and had intense affection for the Imām. Throughout the period that I was with the Imām, because he always took the initiative in greeting, I never succeeded even once to greet him before he had done so.¹

We would be caught unaware

If the Imām entered a place, it was very difficult to be able to take the initiative in greeting him. Many times it occurred that we would go to his office earlier and would be waiting eagerly for his entrance and even clears our throat in preparation to greet him but yet again we would be caught unaware and he would greet us before we could greet him.²

I heard somebody greet me

One day I was passing from the street that lay between the mosques of late Shaykh Anṣārī and the residence of the Imām with my head lowered that I heard somebody greet me. When I looked up my eyes fell on the blessed countenance of the Imām. In an instant I had a wonderful feeling within me and became tongue-tied. After all he was the Imām—my source of inspiration and emulation while I was no more than an inconsequential and unknown seventeen-year old seminary student.³

He greeted me before I had resolved to greet him

The Imām's attitude towards students and the clergy was like that of meeting between two equal clergymen. It never occurred that I visit him and he not takes the lead in greeting me. At times when the distance between the Imām and me was around ten or fifteen meters and I thought that he would

¹ Not even once did I succeed in taking the initiative in greeting the Imām: Āyatullāh 'Izzuddīn Zanjānī, *ibid.*, p. 240.

² We would be caught unaware: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān; *ibid.*, p. 240.

³ I heard somebody greet me: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān; *ibid.*, p. 241.

probably not hear me and wanted to get a bit closer so that he would hear me, but before I would resolve to greet him, he had already greeted me.¹

He dispensed with all superficial protocols

In Najaf, various levels of academics must keep within the frontiers and limits of the hierarchy. For example a seminary student could not discuss or publish at the level of a tutor while a tutor could not make statements and express views at the level of a religious authority while a religious authority could not operate at the level of a Source of Emulation. Each of these individuals must keep to their limits and it was not customary for a Source of Emulation to intend to visit the home of a poor seminary student. It was the tradition that all must respect the authority of the Sources of Emulation and the prominent theologians and go to visit them as a duty. However, when the Imām arrived in Najaf, he visited each and every one of the tutors of the Najaf ‘Hawzah’ or Theological School and meet with the seminary students. One can say with certainty that throughout the Shi‘ite history, there wasn’t a source of emulation who in the period of his religious authority had visited the colleges of the Najaf theological school and spoken with the freshmen seminary students and had looked into their living condition. But it was the Imām who threw away all superficial protocols and laid the foundations of a virtuous Islamic tradition in Najaf.²

I am indebted to the people

On the route to migration to Iraq and refusal of Kuwait to accept the Imām, the Imām stayed in Baghdad for one more night because he was supposed to fly to Paris the next morning (Friday) at 9 A.M. On that Thursday, we were sitting in the presence of the Imām worried and anxious about the situation and the events but the Imām was extremely composed and determined as if nothing had happened. In fact he would even give us consolation. From Tehran there were reports that the people were extremely troubled and many demonstrations and protest rallies had taken place and all were worried about the situation.

I haven’t forgotten this sentence of the Imām who in that state of anxiety and discomfort that we were all in and the unknown future that lay ahead stated thus: “I am ashamed and indebted to the people. They have put themselves in

¹ He greeted me before I had resolved to greet him: *Hujjat al-Islām Murtaḍā Ṣādiqī Tehrānī; ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 241.

² He dispensed with all superficial protocols: *Hujjat al-Islām Muḥtashamī-Pūr; ibid.*, p. 248.

trouble for our sake while we are sitting here in absolute comfort.” Truly wasn’t it amazing that a person in a state of uncertainty, who is exiled and taken from the border to the airport; from Baṣrah to Baghdad and from there to a destination that was unknown and the unknown fate that awaited him should regard himself to be in absolute comfort despite this dilemma and is worried that the people have put themselves in trouble for his sake.¹

He would express his affections profoundly

In 1969, one of the theologians of Tehran by the name of late Āyatullāh Chaploḡi who was among the students of the late Āyatullāh Ḥā’irī-Yazdī in Qum, arrived in Najaf and came to our house. I told late Ḥāj Āqā Muṣṭafā that he had come to stay at my house. The following night late hajj Āqā Muṣṭafā sent a message to me saying that the Imām wanted to visit my house and meet Āyatullāh Chapqolī which came as a surprise to me and I immediately relayed the news to Mr. Chāpḡoli. I had a small three by four meter room which I gave to him to stay. After the dusk and night prayers that he would recite at the Āyatullāh Borūjerdī Theological School, the Imām came to our house and sat down next to Āyatullāh Chapqolī in that humble room. He expressed his warm affections profoundly for this man of spirituality such that after the Imām returned I noticed an amazing spiritual state in the late Chapqoli who was intensely affected by the greatness and humility of the Imām.²

Who am I?

On several occasions the foreign and domestic enemies would launch an extensive propaganda campaign that for example, the Imām was very ill. Some people would request the Imām to hold a meeting at such moments or broadcast a message so that the morale of the fighters of Islam was not weakened at the warfront. However, the Imām, would state that: “Are the people fighting the war for me that they should be weakened; they are fighting for the cause of God and for Islam and will never become sluggish. Who am I that with my passing away Islam and the Revolution would be destroyed?”³

¹ I am indebted to the people: Muḥammad Riḏā Nāṣirī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 243.

² He would express his affections profoundly: Sayyid Akbar Muḥtashamī-Pūr, *ibid.*, p. 249.

³ Who am I? Muḥammad ‘Alī Anṣārī; *ibid.*, p. 247-248.

I hope it does not affect me

During the first term of the Islamic Consultative Assembly when I held a meeting with the Imām, one of the representatives (Fakhruddīn Ḥijāzī) who was present showered a lot of praises on the Imām. I saw his face become pale on hearing those words of praise and at the end of the meeting he said: “I hope that these words do not have an effect on me as I am not more than a servant.”¹

He showed a lot of humility

The Assembly of Experts chose a delegation from among its members to be in the presence of the Imām in connection with Article 111 of the constitution. I too was among the delegates. The members of the delegation held a session with the Imām and stated that they were open to any solution put forward by the Imām. However, the Imām showed such a lot of humility in relation to us that the conversation of the chosen members after the meeting hovered entirely round the humility and dignity of the Imām that truly was extremely astonishing for all of us.²

How we should express our gratitude to the nation?

One day I went to visit the Imām. He stated: “I don’t know how we should be grateful to the nation and express our gratitude. When I see these youths, I feel humbled by them.”³

I resolved to kiss his hands

One night when we were in the presence of the Imām, he stated: “An old man had come to see me and with absolute confidence told me that two of his sons had been martyred in the path of Islam while the body of his third son who was also his last son (and was only 18 years old and was martyred in the *Wal-Fajr* 8 offensive) was brought for burial today and because he too was on his way to the warfront he had come to take leave from me.” The Imām continued: “The courage and spirit of valor of this man had such an impact on me that I resolved to kiss his hands but because he was on the floor of the courtyard and I was upstairs, my lips could not reach his hands.”⁴

¹ I hope it does not have an effect on me: Nāṭiq Nūrī, *ibid.*, p. 230.

² He showed a lot of humility: Muwaḥḥidī Kermānī, *ibid.*, p. 237.

³ How should we express our gratitude to the nation?

⁴ I resolved to kiss his hands: Mūsawī Ardabīlī, *ibid.*

His countenance changed dramatically

In the presence of the Imām I mentioned to him that before the “Bloody Friday” of Mecca, everybody was amazed and astonished that his holiness had selected such an apt verse from the glorious Qur’an for the opening of this year’s Ḥāġ pilgrimage message. Then when the tragedy happened we understood the meaning of the verse while at the same time it multiplied astonishment and amazement of one and all.

Until before this part of my statement the Imām with his queries, gazes and hearings, was attesting to my statement and welcoming it while he sought fresh news and information of the observations of the tragedy. However, when I spoke of the verse and the Ḥāġ message and wanted to make a statement testifying to his greatness, he lowered his eyes and his countenance changed dramatically as if this topic was neither fresh nor worthy of mentioning. It appeared as if he did not want to disclose anything on this subject even by his gaze and the look in his eyes.¹

They should not chant slogans for me

In one of his public meetings before coming to the Ḥusayniyyah, the Imām stated to me that, “Tell the public not to chant slogans for me.”²

I don’t like my photo to be portrayed

I heard that when Muḥammad Hāshimī went to meet with the Imām after being appointed as the Managing Director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), the Imām had told him that he did not like the broadcasting station to first televise his photo and news about him. In reply he had told the Imām that the people demanded to see his photo and to broadcast news about him. The Imām retorted that, “We did not become familiar with the people through the radio and television broadcasts. Our acquaintance with the people started before these matters that the broadcasting station should be placed at our disposal. Therefore, the relationship between the people with us and our relationship with the people has nothing to do with these matters.”³

¹ His countenance changed dramatically: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān; *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 236.

² They should not chant slogans for me: Āyatullāh Tawassulī; *ibid.*

³ I don’t like my photo to be portrayed: Masīh Borūjerdī; *ibid.*, pp. 236-237.

I wish I had a relationship

A young man wrote to the Imām that “O Imām, because you love God and I love you. O Imām because you have a relationship with God we too have relationship with you.” The Imām read these words and cried instead of saying that how good it is that I have a relationship with God rather he stated: “I wish I had a relationship and these words were true.”¹

The people are in the lead

One night in the house of Hāj Aḥmad Āqā, we were in the presence of the Imām with a few of our friends. The discussion came up about the selflessness of the people. The Imām stated: “The people are in the lead; we are behind them.” One of the friends remarked that if they were to confess that they were followers of the people, it held true in their case but about the Imām one could not say the same thing because he was leading the people. I remember that the Imām replied: “No, the people are in the lead.” He truly and deeply believed in the goodness and revolutionary spirit of the people.²

Presence of the nation has brought respect in its wake

One day Hāj Aḥmad Āqā invited Mr. Mahmoud Borūjerdī—son-in-law of the Imām to his house. At this invitation, Messrs. Šāni‘ī, Tawassulī, Jamārānī and other friends were also present. As a mark of respect for the father of Mr. Mahmoud Borūjerdī, the Imām after reciting the mandatory prayer joined the gathering. This get-together coincided with the visit of Āyatullāh Khāmene’ī to the United Nations. Among those present, the discussion revolved around his eloquent speech in that organization. The invitees praised the spirited and powerful speech of Āyatullāh Khāmene’ī that was particularly useful in explaining Islam and the Islamic Revolution. At this time, when the father of Mr. Mahmoud Borūjerdī began to speak, those present fell silent and listened to his words. He supplicated for the health of the Imām and mentioned that because of the blessed presence of the Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the beloved Islam was now a factor in big organizations such as the United Nations. The Imām with his trademark humility stated: “It is the nation that has discovered its path and the authorities also know what they must do. Now this path will continue whether I am present or not. It is this presence of the nation in the arena that has gained us respect.” He added: “I

¹ I wish I did have a relationship: *Huajjt al-Islam Maḥallātī; ibid.*

² The people are in the lead: *Mīr Ḥusayn Mūsawī; ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 117-118.

am certain that the nation of Iran will remain present in the arena and even this presence will also increase qualitatively.”¹

Legalism

I will not give loan

It was 1973 that we went together with Hāj Aḥmad Āqā and our son Hāj Ḥasan Āqā who was barely one or two years old to Najaf. It was natural that in those times of exile and alienation, our presence resulted in the Imām and his honorable spouse to feel happy. We were supposed to stay in Najaf for two months and then return to Iran. In those days, the Endowment Organization of the evil ‘*Tāghūtī*’ regime was responsible for Hāj pilgrimage affairs and so many people including Hāj Sayyid Aḥmad Āqā did not accept to perform Hāj under those circumstances from Iran. Therefore the most appropriate moment for undertaking this pilgrimage was to travel from Iraq which enjoyed certain advantages including that it was undertaken outside the jurisdiction of the Endowment Organization. Moreover, the expenses of travel was much lower from there and also the spouse of the Imām who was very keen to perform the pilgrimage could accompany her son Hāj Aḥmad Āqā; and perhaps more important than all else was that our period of stay in Najaf would last for about seven to eight months which itself could be an extremely attractive situation for the Imām and his spouse in that period.

When the topic of traveling came up, the only problem was the lack of money to pay for the expenses of travel. Hāj Khānom proposed that we borrow from the Imām—something that neither me nor Hāj Aḥmad Āqā were willing to do. One day we were sitting together that Khānom told the Imām that Hāj Aḥmad and his wife wanted to go to Mecca. The Imām stated: “Well, they can go.” Khānom added that going to Mecca required money to which the Imām replied: “Every person that wants to go to Mecca needs money; if they have money they go and if they don’t have, they don’t go.” Khānom then asked the Imām to give them a loan. The Imām replied: I do not give loan.” This sentence was repeated once or two and finally Khānom asked the Imām why he did not give loan to which the Imām responded saying that: “The money does not belong to me. I give loan to a person that I know will return the money; from where will they return the money?” Again, Khānom said that they would return it. The Imām asked, “From where?” Khānom replied that if he paid Fatemeh’s dowry, they can go. Frankly, this

¹ Presence of the nation has brought us respect in its wake: ‘Alī Akbar Āshtiyānī, *ibid*, p. 118.

conversation especially the last sentence was extremely difficult for me to digest especially when the Imām stated: “Does she demand her dowry? Well, if it must be paid on demand that is another matter.” Finally I intervened and said that this was not the issue at all; the question is that if going to Hāj is obligatory for us then this is the best opportunity. (I wanted to enter the debate from the angle of the obligatory status of the Hāj pilgrimage). The Imām replied that: “If you don’t have money and the means then it is not compulsory for you.” I agreed and the matter was settled there. Two or three days later, Hāj Aḥmad Āqā told his mother that they wanted to return and that she prepare the preliminaries for their journey. Khānom relied with discomfort that it was no problem. To perform the preliminaries of our return journey and the necessary tasks, we handed our passports to Shaykh Abdul ‘Alī Qarahī. The next day Khānom said with discomfort that: “This is the last week that they are staying here; from next week our loneliness will begin once again.” The Imām stated: “Why, they will be here.” With discomfort and surprise Khānom told the Imām that since he was not willing to give them a loan, they had handed their passports to Shaykh Qarahī that. The Imām stated with a smile that: “I told Hāj Shaykh to wait.” We understood that the Imām had repented but the reason was not clear but I remember that Hāj Aḥmad Āqā narrated to me that the Imām had said that: If I trust that you will repay your loan, I have no objection in giving you a loan.” Well now how do we repay the loan? I suggested that as soon as we return to Iran, I will sell my gold ornaments and repay the Imām’s loan through Mr. Pasandīdeh. Anyway, we took the money and along with Hāj Khānom went to Mecca. What we went through in our journey is a long story but as soon we returned to Qum, I sold off my gold ornaments and repaid the loan of the Imām to Mr. Pasandīdeh.¹

Even if Stalin is in power

One night I was at a meeting with the Imām in Najaf that one of the seminary students present asked him whether one could pay two rials for a postage stamp costing eight rials and avoid payment of the balance. In reply the Imām stated: “This is not legitimate,” and added, “even if Stalin is in power. Safeguarding the system is a priority.”²

¹ I will not give loan: Mrs. Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā’ī: *Mirror of Virtue*; p. 124-126.

² Even if Stalin is in power: Sayed Mujtabā Rūdbārī: excerpts from ‘*Ways of the Imām*’ vol. 4, p. 290.

Why did you enter illegally!

Because I was prohibited from leaving Iran, I crossed the border to Najaf illegally and faced a lot of difficulties on the way. It was noon when I went to see the Imām. I opened the door to the room and greeted him and he responded stating: “Did you also come illegally?” I answered in the affirmative and the Imām said: “Don’t come next time.” I answered in agreement saying that I would not come again. He stated: “I mean don’t come illegally. Why do you put yourself in danger and come illegally? Don’t do such a thing again. If you can come with a passport, it is alright but don’t come illegally.” This insistence was because he wanted to compel me to observe regulations.¹

He considered non-observance of regulations to be a sin

The Imām believed in strictly following the regulations and had a lot of respect for the laws. He considered observance of the laws to be a religious duty meaning that even for traffic rules, he considered it to be a sin if for example, a car passed ‘no entry’ zone or if a person exceeded the prescribed speed limits during driving. Because this was against the regulations, the Imām considered it to be a sin.²

I won’t eat of this meat

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Imām was that he would observe the laws and social rules of the society even of non-Islamic states. In particular, when in Paris, the brethren collected money to buy a sheep and slaughtered it behind the courtyard where the Imām would hold mandatory prayers on the occasion of the night of ‘‘Āshūrā’, and prepared food from it and sent a portion to the Imām’s house. Because in France there is a rule that slaughter of any animal other than in the slaughterhouse—because of matters of hygiene—is forbidden, thus when the Imām came to know of this rule he declared: “Because it is an infringement of the rules of this country, I will not eat of this meat.”³

¹ Why did you enter illegally? ‘Alī Akbar Mas‘ūdī Khomeinī: *ibid.*

² He considered non-observance of rules to be a sin: Mrs. Zahrā Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*

³ I shall not eat of this meat: Mrs. Dabbāgh; *ibid.*, p. 291.

I got up to recite my prayers

One of the physicians of Qum narrated that when the news was broadcast that the Imām had suffered a heart attack, he went to his bedside and checked his blood pressure. His blood pressure was 5 which was dangerously low from the medical point of view. He performed the primary medical checks and after about two hours his condition improved. However, as a rule, the Imām could not and must not engage in any movement but he prepared to move and got up from his bed. The physician asked him why he had got up from the bed to which he replied: “For prayers”. Then he told the Imām that just as the Imām was a competent religious authority, similarly, he was a medical authority and thus according to his medical verdict his movement was forbidden and that the Imām must recite his prayers while lying on the bed. The Imām then took his words very seriously and acted according to his instructions.¹

Act according to regulations with him

When the letter came from the ground forces that I had no responsibility to discharge in the west of the country, I replied that I had been sent by the Supreme Defense Council and shall return to Tehran on their orders and not on the orders of Banī Ṣadr (former president) and until they had not sent me orders, I would remain there. I was not aware that this response reflected some sort of revolt from the military point of view. Banī Ṣadr took my reply to the Imām and the Imām who did not know me had said to Banī Ṣadr that, “Act according to the regulations with him.” Thus when the congregation prayer leaders had gone to the Imām and told the Imām that I was hardworking individual whom Banī Ṣadr had discharged from his job and confiscated his military rank from him and although the individuals that had gone to meet the Imām were prominent and senior officials, yet the Imām had declared decisively that, “Such and such person has revolted.” Of course this did not mean that the Imām had accepted their words; but the Imām believed strongly in performance of duty and observance of the law.²

Observance of the regulations of the Islamic government

As one of the civil servants who was in the Imām office for years I can say with assurance that in the realm of personal life of the Imām there was no disobedience of regulations of the Islamic government. For example, the bills

¹ I got up to recite prayers: Mrs. Zahrā Muṣṭafawī: *ibid.*, p. 295.

² Act according to regulations with him; Martyr Sayyid Shīrāzī: *Ibid*, p. 303.

and receipts pertaining to water, electricity, telephone and taxes would be paid on the spot.¹

What time should she come?

Once when Mr. Anṣārī was invited to visit the frontline in the South so that he carried the message of love and peace of the Imām for the fighters of Islam, at night when we met him in the public relations department of the Karbalā Operations command quarters, he put his hand in his pocket and took out a newspaper cutting and told me that: “This is the handwriting of the Imām which I present to you.” The Imām had addressed him in his beautiful handwriting in the margin of the newspaper page stating that, “The wife of the late martyr Beheshtī wants an appointment. What time should she come?” Mr. Anṣārī would say that the Imām respected the rules and regulations of his own office and household to such an extent that although it was his own time, yet he asks about the programming from others so that the programs of the office did not clash.²

If this is the rule, then don’t bring it

One day I was with the Imām that he turned to my brother Ḥāj Aḥmad Āqā and said: “You bring the book ‘*Kashf al-Asrār*’ from here.” The Imām was referring him to a place that I thought probably implied that the Jamārān Ḥusayniyyah had a library because he referred to a very close location and said: “Bring it for me from there.” Aḥmad Āqā replied that he would do as he was instructed but that, “It is the rules of this library that they do not allow you to take away books. Whoever wants a book must go there and read it.” The Imām stated; “If this is their rule then it is not necessary for you to bring the book” and then turning towards me he asked if I could get hold of the book which I replied in the affirmative and arranged it from another place and gave it to him.³

He observed the rules of the house

His Holiness the Imām took a walk three times a day and each time it lasted for about twenty minutes. One day when I was accompanying him, after we finished walking, he pointed to a part of the front yard and said, “I would like

¹ Observance of the regulations of the Islamic government: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmiyān; *ibid.*, p. 289.

² What time should she come? Ghulām ‘Alī Rajā’ī; *ibid.*

³ If this is their rule then don’t bring it.

to sit here and sip a cup of tea.” I said that that was no problem and I would bring a small rug and spread it on the floor so that he could sip his tea there. “No!” he retorted, “your mother has said that whenever we wish to sit in the front yard, we must not sit in this part but should spread the rug and sit on the other side.” This is the extent to which the Imām observed the rules of the house set by the woman of the household. That day he neither sat in the front yard nor did he sip tea.¹

Why do you want to change my prescribed medications?

I seldom saw a sick person during my days of practicing medicine that like the Imām follow the prescriptions of the doctor to the letter. For instance if it was prescribed that so and son medicine must be taken at every hour, this was something that an ordinary mortal cannot tolerate whereas for him—who was an exceptional man from every angle—it was perfectly easy to implement. We too intended to prescribe drugs that were “long active’ but were afraid that its absorption in the body would take place suddenly and cause undesirable side-effects. In any case, when we mentioned it to the Imām, he said: “Why do you want to change the prescription of my drugs?” We replied that it was possible that his tolerance to drugs given hourly would reduce and we would feel responsible for causing him discomfort. He stated: “On no account will it cause me discomfort and it is not necessary for you to attempt to change the prescription.”²

He would delegate power to the authorities

An outstanding and noteworthy feature in the Imām’s style of management was expansion of the area of decision-making and non-intervention in affairs that in keeping with the established government bodies needed to be performed by others. By the blessing of this style and policy of the Imām, we attained a maturity and discipline in the establishments. By giving authority and incentive as well as non-intervention in unimportant issues and precise supervision, the Imām enabled the forces to develop and to mature.³

¹ He observed the rules of the house: Mrs. Zahrā Muṣṭafawī: *ibid.*, pp. 292-293.

² Why do you want to change the prescribed drugs? Dr. Pūr-Muqaddas; *ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

³ He delegated responsibility to the authorities: Mīr Ḥusayn Mūsawī: *ibid.*, pp. 295.

He emphasized the independence of the authorities

The intervention of the Imām in government duties was always in strategic cases. He always disliked interference in the duties of the government organizations and this style resulted in the maturity and development of the government bodies and apparatus. The Imām strongly believed in discipline in affairs and visits to his office was always arranged through relevant and responsible bodies. I never saw his office get involved in duties of government bodies. I do not even recall except a single instance when the Imām intervened to appoint an individual to a position or to dismiss him; or to recommend the presence or absence of an individual in the formation of government. That single exceptional instance was the Minister of Information. In this case too he did not mention a name and only reminded me to consult with him after I had come to a conclusion concerning an individual or individuals. Regarding the formation of cabinet and introduction of ministers to the legislative assembly, if at any time there was a problem that could not be resolved through normal procedures; he would delegate the responsibility for resolving the issue to a council. In any case, in general, I must say that the Imām emphasized the independence of the authorities and their actions be within the framework of the Constitution.¹

Ask the Prime Minister

About the religious taxes that was received from the followers of the Imām from abroad in the form of foreign exchange, and sometimes required them to be converted into Iranian rials, the issue was either they be sold to the Central Bank of Iran at the official rate (and consequently the difference between the bank rate and the free market rate be deducted from the needy recipients) or that they be sold in the free market and the total amount be spent on assigned religious instances. It was natural that for example if one hundred dollars was to be paid to charity or as religious tax to the poor, it was necessary that the same or its actual value be paid to the poor. In any case, the Imām stated: “Ask Mr. Mūsawī—the then prime minister—that in case it is alright from the government point of view, then the foreign currency be sold in the free market.”² ✍

¹ He emphasized the independence of the authorities: Mīr Ḥusayn Mūsawī, *ibid.*, pp. 296-297.

² Ask the prime minister: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān; *ibid.*, p. 302.

Part 2: Subtle Spirit

Intimacy with the Qur'an

He would sit on the ground

After the year 1942, the Imām would usually spend the summers in Mashhad and on this occasion, one or two senior clergymen of our theological school who were friendly with him organized visits. The school had a small number of students and an exclusive group of theologians whose number did not exceed ten or fifteen persons and who knew the Imām would come to meet him. He would also make several visits over there. The head of that school was a prominent theologian and was very close to him. It was the blessed month of Ramaḍān and summer. At nights until the break of dawn, the Gowharshād mosque would be filled with people. The people would not sleep at night in order to supplicate at nights and instead would sleep during the day. I would go to the Gowharshād mosque because prominent sermonizers would deliver sermons there. One of them was my own father. Inside the Gowharshād mosque and its precincts, there were persons who would supplicate on their own. I would often note the Imām place his robe on the ground and sit in the midst of the people. In those times, not many people knew him. At nine in the night when I would pass from there in order to go to the Shrine of Imām Riḍā (‘a), I would see him sitting and being engaged in supplication. I would go to the shrine, recite my daily prayers, engage in debate with the seminary students in a corner of the mosque and about three hours later when I returned and passed from there, I would see that he was still sitting and reciting prayers, supplications and the Qur'an. I would be

very amazed at his patience and endurance that he was so much devoted to prayers and worship.¹

The Imām finished reciting the Qur’an at the age of seven

The Imām studied at the religious school of Ākhūnd Mollā Abu’l-Qāsim. Mollā Abu’l-Qāsim was an old man whose religious school was located near the Imām’s house. I too studied at his school. Each one of the children would recite half a chapter of the Qur’an at the religious school daily and whenever any of the children would finish recitation of the complete Qur’an, it was customary for him to offer lunch to the Mollā as well as the rest of the children.

After finishing rendering of the whole Qur’an when he was almost seven, the Imām went to study literature and Arabic lessons from Shaykh Ja‘far—paternal cousin of my mother.²

He would recite two chapters from the Qur’an daily

In the hours before the dusk and night mandatory prayers the Imām would either read the “the Key Book” or the Qur’an. Once I remember telling me that he would recite two chapters from the Qur’an everyday in rapid reading style.³

He always read the Qur’an

In the blessed month of Ramaḍān, the Imām would develop a great affability for the Qur’an. I do not recall not having gone to meet him in the blessed month of Ramaḍān especially in the last year of his life in mid-1989 and not see him deeply absorbed in recitation of the Qur’an. Whenever something came up and I would go into his presence, I saw him busy reciting the glorious Qur’an.⁴

¹ He would sit on the ground: Āyatullāh Wā‘iz-Zādeh Khorāsānī extracts from biography of Imām Khomeinī, vol. 3, p. 189.

² The Imām finished recitation of the Qur’an at the age of seven: Āyatullāh Pasandīdeh; Excerpts from the Biography of the Imām, vol. 3, p. 3.

³ He would recite two chapters of the Qur’an daily: Masīḥ Borūjerdī: *ibid.*

⁴ He always read the Qur’an: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān, *ibid.*, p. 5.

Recitation of the Qur'an is part of the daily routine of the Imām

As far as I can remember, the Imām from the beginning of his life until now would recite a part of the Qur'an daily and this was one of his routine tasks that is based on the exacting discipline that he had in life. He would devote an hour for recitation and devotion to the glorious Qur'an. In that hour nobody went to him and he would not give a reply to any query and would submit his heart and soul to the Qur'an and focus on its verses and their interpretations.¹

He is deeply attached to the Qur'an

The Imām is deeply attached to the Qur'an. For instance, after breakfast and meeting with authorities and others, at around half past nine in the morning and after taking a stroll, he begins to recite the Qur'an. Thereafter, he resorts to some of the affairs and reading the confidential letters that must be attended to exclusively by him. At the approach of the noon prayers, he again performs ablutions and recites the Qur'an. The Imām has a profound attachment and affinity for the Qur'an and the supplications.²

I want the eyes to recite the Qur'an

While in exile in the city of Najaf, the Imām had an eye problem. The doctor came, checked his eyes and remarked: "You should try to avoid reading the Qur'an for a few days and rest." The Imām smiled and stated: Doctor, I want the eyes in order to recite the Qur'an. Of what use are they if I cannot recite the Qur'an with them. You do something so that I am able to recite the Qur'an."³

Continue to recite my dear!

On February 1, 1979 when the helicopter landed in Behesht-e Zahrā cemetery, security personnel built a human wall extending up to the platform and the Imām along with Ḥāj Aḥmad Āqā and a few clergymen sat on the platform. At first a young man with a wonderful and pleasing voice recited a few verses from the glorious Qur'an with their interpretation. Every time he

¹ Recitation of the Qur'an is part of the daily routine of the Imām: Hujjat al-Islām Rasūlī Maḥallāfī, *ibid.*

² He is deeply attached to the Qur'an; Ḥasan Thaḳafī, *ibid.*, p. 6.

³ I want the eyes to recite the Qur'an; Dr. Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ibid.*

wanted to finish his recitation, the Imām would urge him on saying: “Continue the recitation my dear!”¹

Even on the night before the day of surgery he would recite the Qur’an

The Imām read a few pages of the Qur’an—about one chapter or more—daily. Even in his last days and on the night before the surgery, the recitation of the Qur’an and the optional midnight prayer were not discontinued.²

He sat on the floor

Once everybody saw that at an official meeting held at the Ḥusayniyyah Jamārān, the Imām exceptionally sat on the floor instead of sitting in his usual place on the chair as soon as he entered. It was on the day when the winners of the Qur’an Recitation Competition came into the presence of the Imām and it was programmed that at that get together, a few verses of the Qur’an were to be recited.³

Because you were reciting the Qur’an I became fond of you

I was reciting the Qur’an at the shrine of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (‘a) and was always there. The Imām saw me there and wanted to meet me. One day he sent a person to call me. Initially, I did not go because I thought the Imām is upset with me and wanted to give me a piece of his mind. The second that same person again came to call me and said: “The Imām has work with you,” I pleaded with him to tell me what work he had with me and he replied: “By God, I don’t know.” I asked him whether he was upset with me to which he replied: “No he only told me to go and bring the person from the shrine to him.” I asked to leave and told him that I would come later and he went away. When I was received by the Imām he asked me my name and I replied, “Ḥāj Ibrāhīm Khādim Najafī!” he stated: “Would you like to live in this house and help us?” I replied that I could not be of much assistance to him. He stated: “You will become familiar with the job; be assured that you will be comfortable over here. Moreover, I have become fond of you and its not important how capable you are in handling the job here because you are a

¹ Continue to recite my dear! *Keyhān* reporter, *ibid.*, p. 9.

² Even on the night before the day of surgery, he would recite the Qur’an: Rasūlī Maḥallāfī, *ibid.*, p. 8.

³ He sat on the floor: Ibrāhīm Najafī (servant at the Imām’s residence) *ibid.*

pious person and whenever I would come to the shrine, I would see you preoccupied with recitation of the Qur'an and supplications."¹

Refinement of Spirit

When will these buds open?

One day while the Imām was returning from the Ḥusayniyyah after giving a speech about the war and hatred of America, when he was entering the front yard and began to take a stroll, as I was by his side, he stated to me that, "When will these buds open? How many days dose it take for the buds to bloom?"²

Which tree is more beautiful?

Once when I was strolling with the Imām in the front yard he told me: "Can you tell me which one of the trees is more beautiful?" Until then I had not paid any attention to this subject and that for instance, the way in which the branches spread out from the tree trunk gave a certain beauty to a tree. Thus I replied: "Well, this one."

The Imām said: "Don't just say something; what is your reason for the beauty of this tree? Go and think for a couple of days." I jokingly said that because that tree was green! The Imām said: "No, go and find out what makes a tree beautiful. See how the branches are placed on the tree trunk. What is the shape of the tree trunk. See how the leaves are arranged on the branches. What is the form of the shade of the tree..." he would mention each one of these aspects and would point to them. He continued: "See the overall form of this tree... see its separate components." There was another tree at the corner of the front yard. Half an hour before dusk, I was strolling with the Imām in the front yard. He said: "Fathi, you were not present! At dawn before sunrise when I take a stroll, you don't know how beautiful this tree is; when the sun shines from behind over the top of the tree, it gives this part of the tree a special beauty."³

¹ Because you were reciting the Qur'an I became fond of you.

² When will this bud open? Zahrā Ishrāqī; extracted from the Biography of the Imām, vol. 2, p. 169.

³ Which tree is more beautiful? Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā'ī; *ibid.*, p. 170.

Be careful that the thorn does not cause problem for ‘Alī

One day when the Imām was taking a stroll, he stopped beside a fragrant rose flower stem and said: “When ‘Alī comes to touch this flower, the thorns will cut his hand. Cut off the pointed end of the thorn so that it does not cause problem for ‘Alī.” Incidentally the gardener, who would tend the flowers, chipped off all the thorns right from the top to the bottom of the stem. Later when he saw it, he said with regret: “Why has the gardener done this and chipped off all of them! I meant that he cut only the thorn that was beneath. Why has he damaged this flower?”¹

How beautiful they are!

One day the Imām was preoccupied with prayers in the balcony of his home. Suddenly the sound of red alert siren resonated. The Imām was uttering the ‘salaam’ that signaled the end of the mandatory prayer. I took a deep look at his face. There was no change at all in his facial expression. After the conclusion of the prayer, he looked halfway up the sky and with a calm tone while looking at the anti-aircraft fire that had filled the overhead sky stated: “Look how beautiful they are!”²

I will eat it if it is delicious

If we wanted to place food in front of the Imām we must first attend to its outward appearance. If it did not look beautiful, he would not eat even if it tasted very delicious. However, if it looked beautiful, he would say: “I will taste it first and if it’s delicious I will eat.”

It was for this reason that whenever we cooked something for the Imām we always tried to give it a beautiful outward appearance. The Imām had a unique refinement that on many occasions I would think that I must write them down. If I did that I would have been able to write a whole book about his refinements.³

¹ Be careful that the thorn dose not cause problem for Hāj Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā’ī; *ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

² How beautiful they are! Sayyid Ḥasan Khomeinī, *ibid.*, p. 71.

³ I will eat it if it is delicious: Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā’ī; *ibid.*, pp. 171-172.

He was in love with beauty

The Imām had a powerful presence in the house. For example, he would calculate the time it took for a bud to bloom and the petals of that bloom to shrivel and fall. For instance on the same day of the explosion at the Islamic Republic party headquarters and the martyrdom of Mr. Beheshtī and the rest of his friends, he turned his countenance towards his niece and said: “Do you know how many days it is since this flower has bloomed?” Many times the Imām would point to a flower and address me saying that the bud was his grandson ‘Alī while he would associate the flower whose petals were falling with him. The Imām loved beauty, cleanliness and fragrance.¹

This flower is three days old

My mother would narrate that one day the Imām was strolling in the garden in which there were many flowers. She went up to him and he told her that: “How many days old is this flower?” She answered that she did not know. He stated: “This flower is three days old.” He showed her other flowers and told her on what day each of them had blossomed and how many days old they were. Then he named the flowers after his grandchildren. He pointed to a newly blossomed flower and said: “This is ‘Alī; that one is Ḥasan and that one over there is Yāsir.”²

How many days old do you think this bouquet is?

Sometimes I would stroll with the Imām. He would take a walk thrice a day and these moments were the best opportunity to see him. Every time I would notice how graciously and intensely he would look at his surroundings. I remember one day he was standing beside a bouquet and while facing me he stated: “How many days old do you think this bouquet is?” I had never paid attention to it and told him that I did not know. He said: “I know exactly” Well I don’t remember very well but I think he said it was two and half days old. I asked: “Do you see this bouquet every day?” He replied; “I look at it everyday. Everyday when I pass from here, I notice how much it has changed and now it is two and half days old.”³

¹ He was in love with beauty: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī: *ibid.*, p. 71.

² This flower is three days old: Sayyid Ḥasan Khomeinī; *ibid.*

³ How many days old do you think this bouquet is? Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *ibid.*, p. 172-173.

He would pass judgment on the verses I would recite

Sometimes when I was with the Imām I would recite some ‘*Ghazals*’ that were beautiful in my opinion. For example, I would see a ‘*Ghazal*’ in a newspaper which I thought was beautiful and I would recite it for him and he would listen to it with love and affection and enjoy it. Sometimes he would also pass judgment on the verses that I would recite.”¹

He was extremely poetic

Sometimes it would occur that I or others would take a bouquet of flowers for the Imām and the Imām would welcome the bouquet with a gracious and sincere smile. The Imām is extremely poetic and recites wonderful verses. He kept a volume of verses that contained lovely verses which the “Savak” security police of the Shāh shredded when they invaded his residence in Qum.²

The heart is the realm of divinity

The late Āqā Wā‘iz-Zādeh Khwānsārī who was a prominent theologian, spiritualist and sermonizer, was extremely attached to the Imām. One day he stated to me to go with him to meet Ḥāj Āqā Rūḥullāh. We were received by the Imām. With regard to their past friendship the Imām stated to him that: “Mr. Wā‘iz-Zādeh, because of our friendship with you, we have always been privileged whether from your academic debates or whether from your literary verses.” As soon as the Imām had spoken these words, the late Wā‘iz-Zādeh began to recite a ‘*Rubā‘ī*’ as follows:

“Every one catches your hair and I your curls,
Every one seeks your face and I your eyebrow;
In the cycle of a full twelve moon;
There is one blessed moon and that is your looks.”
In answer the Imām would immediately recite this Rubaie:
“I opened my eyes from a deep sleep,
Look! The doors of sedition have opened;
Don’t attend the congregation prayer, for I fear,
You’ll kill the prayer leader and break-up the ranks of the worshippers.”
Next the late Wā‘iz-Zādeh recited the verses from Moulavi that:
“Listen to the flute that narrates,

¹ He would pass judgment on the verses I would recite: Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *ibid.*, p. 175.

² He was extremely poetic: Ḥasan Thaqafī, *ibid.*

And complains about separations.”

In reply the Imām stated:

“Don’t listen to the flute which is the means of the miserable,
Listen to the heart which is the realm of divinity;

For if the flute burns, it becomes a heap of ashes,

Whereas if the heart burns, it becomes the home of the beloved.”¹

This is the blessing of God

One day in Paris, the Imām came out of the house while it was snowing heavily. When the Imām entered the open space, one of the French policemen who was carrying an umbrella came near and wanted to hold the umbrella over the Imām’s head. The Imām told him that it wasn’t necessary for it was a blessing of God and there was no need to seek shelter from it.²

External Sophistication

Sometimes he would use fragrance on his shirt

In my opinion, perhaps the most distinguishing quality of the Imām was his aversion to all kinds of hypocrisy, public deception and pretension. The Imām wore clean clothes. Not once did I see the smallest stain or dirt on his clothes. The Imām firmly believed that shoes should be polished and socks should be appropriate. He wore his turban properly and once in a while would use fragrance on his shirt. In sum, he would appear in public in a clean and pristine appearance.³

He was the essence of cleanliness and hygiene

The Imām was extremely clean to the extent that one of his outstanding features was hygiene. We remember right from his youth that he was an essence of cleanliness and hygiene. At that time when we were small, the streets were muddy and the seminary students in mud up to their knees and their robes would be muddied. But he would walk and take steps so gently in

¹ The heart is the realm of divinity: Borhānī, *ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

² This is the blessing of God: Mrs. Dabbāgh; extracted from the biography of Imām Khomeinī, vol. 3, p. 188.

³ He would sometimes use fragrance on his shirt, Āyatullāh Ja‘far Subhānī; *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 153.

the lanes that at times; for instance, about ten specks of dirt would cling to his robe. He would bring the robe into the room, place it in front of the heater and when the specks would dry we would remove them and clean them with a stain remover.¹

He would always clean his shoes with a napkin

Whenever the Imām wanted to be received at the shrine in Najaf, he would clean his shoes with a napkin. He also placed a mirror in the front yard that he would use to look into to comb his beard. He would also use fragrance and leave the house. He would even not neglect the non-obligatory acts and would always tell us to perform them. Sometimes I would visit the house of the Imām twice a day. However, whenever we wanted to go to his house we never went directly because we thought that if he saw us in that state, he would ask us the reason for our unkempt appearance and why we looked so horrible and that we must look proper and disciplined. We would always try to look neat and proper so that when we met him, we were neat and in appropriate attire.²

His clothes for official duties was separate

When the Imām came to his room from the Ḥusayniyyah, his robe was different and his turban was different. If he came three or four times to the Ḥusayniyyah, yet he would not sit with that same robe in his room. Rather, he would remove his clothes and fold them neatly, put his turban over them and cover it with a white sheet of cloth and then sit down. Again when he is told that the crowd had arrived, he would get up, remove his clothes and change into the clothes reserved for official duties meaning that he was extremely meticulous.³

I never saw a person as clean as him

The Imām liked to make-up his face; that his face was always clean. Really one must take a lesson from the Imām as he was so clean.

He was so tidy that I never saw a person like him. I never saw a tiny stain on his shirt even once. I never noticed it.⁴

¹ He was the essence of cleanliness and hygiene: Farīdeh Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*, p. 154.

² He would always clean his shoes with a napkin: Zahrā Ishrāqī, *ibid.*, p. 156.

³ His clothes for official duties were separate: Zahrā Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*

⁴ I never saw a person as clean as him: Zahrā Ishrāqī, *ibid.*, p. 156.

You seldom found a person as hygienic as the Imām

The Imām always frequently took a bath and also changed clothes frequently. Perhaps he would wear a robe and its undergarments for years and years so that everyone would raise their voice in protest and say that why was he wearing a single robe so often. However, this single robe was so clean and washed that you could seldom find a person of his hygiene in Qum.¹

He would choose the best of perfumes

The Imām was a perfect example of simple living, contentment and thrift in making use of the available living facilities; but always his living environment, office and place of worship and sleep was filled with the enchanting odor of extremely fragrant perfumes and he strongly believed in cleanliness, hygiene and using the best of perfumes. When friends of the Imām from near and afar would gift him various kinds of local and foreign perfumes, it was only in this area that the Imām with his great taste and love of beauty would choose the best of them.²

I would like to eat every morsel with a different spoon

Although the Imām did not eat anything substantial, however believe it or not, he had three or four table spoons and he himself often said that “I desire very much to eat every morsel with a different spoon. I do not like to put the same spoon into my mouth again and again. So that no bit of food dropped on his clothing, he would first spread a napkin and then place a sheet of plastic covering over it. He was extremely particular with regard to cleanliness.

Sometimes we would remark to him that the fuss and ado of his table manners was far greater than the insignificant amount he actually ate.³

He gestured to the nurse

In these last days of the life of the Imām when I went to visit him at the hospital, his clothes were sprinkled with alcohol. There were two yellow stains on his shirt. I saw him gesticulate to the nurse about the stains on his shirt and asked him to change his shirt immediately.⁴

¹ You seldom found a person as hygienic as the Imām: Farīdeh Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*

² He would choose the best of perfumes: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān, *ibid.*, p. 161.

³ I would like to eat every morsel with a different spoon: Zahrā Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*, p. 163.

⁴ He gestured to the nurse: Farīdeh Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*

He never forgot to exercise and to indulge in healthy recreation

Perhaps among our sources of emulation and distinguished theologians, this feature of the Imām is also unique which is that from his early adolescence meaning about eighty years ago, he was absolutely concerned about his health. The usual method of the clergymen is that they are not too preoccupied with physical exercise and healthy recreation. However, Imām Khomeinī or Āqā Rūḥullāh Khomeinī of eighty years ago would never forget—whether in Khomein before the age of twenty and whether in Qum until the age of twenty-five—to exercise and to indulge in healthy recreation in order to strengthen his body and spirit. He not only mentioned this in private, rather he did not feel ashamed if others would also know.¹

Aversion to Luxury and Protocol

Please go away!

From the beginning, the Imām would attempt to avoid doing anything that smacked of seeking fame and ambition. For instance, he would not allow anybody to walk behind him. If a protégé wanted to ask a question and would meet him on the way, he would stop, answer the question and then say politely: “Please go away!”²

He would not walk in the company of friends and acquaintances

The Imām would always pay visits alone. He would not go in a group and hated to wait for companions and indulge in nepotism and favoritism. Shaykh Ḥasan Ṣāni‘ī narrates that one day in Qum; the Imām wished to visit one of the theologians but did not have his address and asked him for the address. He narrates that however much he urged to accompany to the house of the theologian as a guide, the Imām did not accept.³

He would walk down the lanes

After lessons, the seminary students would walk behind the Imām and the Imām in order that people would not say how large a number of protégés he had would change his route and would walk through the lanes and by lanes in order to avoid walking down the streets. Sometimes we would come out of

¹ He never forgot to exercise and indulge in healthy recreation: ‘Alī Davānī; *ibid.*, p. 167.

² Please go away! Mūsawī Tabrīzī; *ibid.*, p. 131.

³ He would not walk in the company of friends and acquaintances: Rūḥānī; *ibid.*, p. 122.

the mosque and go towards the shrine of Her Holiness Fāṭimah Ma‘šūmah. He would walk down the lanes and we would think he was returning home but later we would see him reemerge near the shrine. It became apparent that he was changing his route so that the seminary students did not follow behind him.¹

Do you have a question to ask?

Many times it occurred that on the route to the residence of the Imām, we would walk behind him and pursue him and he would turn back and say: “Do you have a question to ask?”

In other words, it implied that ‘don’t follow me if you don’t have a question to ask’ meaning that he did not like a bunch of seminary students to walk in pursuit of him.²

Gentlemen please leave!

One of the behavioral traits of the Imām was that he never liked to appear in public places surrounded by a coterie of admirers and companions. To the extent possible, he would answer the questions of the seminary students in his house. When he would come out of the lecture room, he would choose a route that passed through quiet lanes that led to his residence. Many times it occurred that after classes a group of gentlemen who wanted to accompany the Imām would pursue him but when the Imām become aware of their presence, he would stop and say: “Gentlemen, please leave!”³

The simplicity of the Imām attracted everybody

In former times, once the Imām traveled to Mashhad by bus. In that same year I too intended to travel to Mashhad with the same bus. Of course at that time I was a young seminary student but I knew the Imām. He was extremely simple. For instance, when we reached Semnan city on the way and the bus halted, he ate food over there, then performed ablutions, removed his robe, sat down and relaxed right there. Imagine a brilliant seminary professor and religious authority of the Theological School behaves like the rest of the passengers that included all sorts of individuals. It was evident that he worked for the cause of God. Later when the bus stopped at Khwājah Rabī‘, I

¹ He would walk down the lanes: Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, *ibid.*, p. 126.

² Do you have a question to ask? Muḥammad ‘Alī Fayḍ, *ibid.*, p. 124.

³ Gentlemen, please leave! Ḥujjat al-Islām ‘Abdu’l-‘Alī Qarahī, *ibid.*, p. 123.

saw he too get down and pay his respects at the mausoleum of that sage and returned. His simplicity was truly interesting for all of us. We thought that since the Imām wanted to go on a pilgrimage to Mashhad, perhaps there would be a lot of protocol. But we were mistaken.¹

I am not acquiescent that you invoke salutations for me

Some years he would come to Maḥallāt in summers. In the summer of 1946 when he arrived in Maḥallāt, the religious authorities of the town who were devotees of the Imām requested that a mosque be placed at their disposal so that people benefited from his presence. He refused and asked that he be left alone and that they continue with their own business. After a few days had passed of the blessed month of Ramaḍān, a group of people said that now that he had not accepted to hold congregational prayer, at least he accept to deliver sermons so that some people could benefit from his presence. Finally, after some convincing the Imām agreed to deliver a sermon which would be held in the blessed month of Ramaḍān at 5 p.m. in the mosque located in the center of the town. The Imām would sit on the ground at the base of a pillar while the crowd sat around him. In this session I noticed a couple of noteworthy points that I will never forget. One was that on the first day when, the religious authorities and clergymen came to participate and the session had ended, the Imām stated to them that if they wanted to participate, he would stop these sessions because they must safeguard their social status. The second point was that it was customary that if a clergyman would enter, out of respect, somebody in the crowd would invoke salutations for him. Here too there was a person who as soon as the Imām entered would urge the crowd to invoke salutations for him. On the first day that the crowd had invoked salutations of peace on Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and his immaculate household (‘a), the Imām asked to see that person after the session had ended and stated: “Are the salutations that you invoke is for my entrance or for the Honorable Prophet of Islam? If you are invoking the salutations for the Honorable Prophet of Islam (ṣ), then invoke it at another time and in case it is for the sake of my entrance to the mosque, then I am not acquiescent.” I remember one point from the session that the Imām stated in a very simple language that: “Beloved Muslim brethren, you who have discovered flannel suit and wear them and with wearing a flannel suit your state of mind changes and you become proud. Have you ever thought for yourself that of

¹ The simplicity of the Imām attracted everybody: Ḥujjat al-Islām Aḥmad Šābirī Hamadānī, *ibid.*, p. 141.

what material these flannel suits are made from? Is it not made of the wool that covers the back of a sheep? Before this, the sheep was wearing the same wool and was not proud of it whereas now that that same wool has been woven and dyed, and has been made into a suit, suddenly it has changed your state of mind. What a misfortune it is that we content ourselves with such baseless things!”¹

He did not add anything to his wealth

Throughout the lifetime of the Imām we witnessed that he did not add anything to his wealth. Only a small property that he inherited from his father that was agricultural land and he spent the income derived from it for his expenditures.

Piety of a man of religion from the viewpoint of the Imām did not mean that the man of religion wear worn-out clothes and be ashamed or that signs of mendicancy be apparent from his attire. The Imām believed that at the same time that the man of religion wears appropriate clothing; he must also prepare his heart and would say that the development and flourishing of the heart is through the medium of spirituality and devotion to God.²

No one has the right to come out with me from the seminary

In 1969, when ten thousand pilgrims from Iran were given the visa to visit Iraq after the Ḥāj pilgrimage, a large number of pilgrims participated in the congregational prayer led by the Imām and held at the Borūjerdī Seminary in Najaf. After the prayers, they wanted to accompany the Imām through the streets while chanting greetings of peace and invoking salutations to the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and his immaculate household (‘a). However the Imām every night after the prayers when he wanted to leave the seminary he ordered to communicate to the people that no one had the right to come out of the seminary with me. Thus the pilgrims would wait in the seminary until the Imām had already left and gradually come out of the seminary. He had ordered the Iranian pilgrims not to pursue him in a situation when he was very lonely in Iraq and without any companion.³

¹ I am not acquiescent that you invoke salutations for me: Ḥujjat al-Islām Sorūsh Maḥallātī, *ibid.*, pp. 141-142.

² He did not add anything to his wealth: Āyatullāh Ja‘far Subḥānī: *Mirror of Virtue*, p. 108.

³ No one has the right to come out with me from the seminary: Sayyid Ḥamīd Rūḥānī; extracted from the Biography of Imām Khomeinī, vol. 2, p. 129.

The house of the Imām was like the dwelling of the poorest residents of Najaf

Around the bend of one of the narrow lanes in which the houses in order to guard against the sizzling sun were built very close to each other was the humble dwelling of Āyatullāh Khomeinī. This house was like the dwelling of the poorest residents of Najaf.

In the three rooms of the house, a maximum number of twelve of those closest to him resided. In this humble dwelling, there was no sign of the leaders of the revolt or the leaders of the opposition front who were living in exile. We were received by the Āyatullāh in a room measuring 3 x 4 meters in a house that was located farthest from the center of the city of Najaf. A city that from the geographical point of view is located in the worst region of Iraq.¹

I don't want a car

One of the devoted Iranian followers of Imām Khomeinī from Germany brought a car as gift for him so that the Imām would avail of it when going to the shrine of the Commander of the Faithful Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (‘a) and for visiting the shrine of the Doyen of the Martyrs Imām Ḥusayn (‘a) in Karbalā. The Imām stated that he did not want a car and that he intended to sell it and use its proceeds for the seminary students. That person insisted that he had brought the car for him but the Imām did not accept until finally he agreed to the wishes of the Imām.²

Gentlemen, do not indulge in excesses!

At one stage during the period of struggle and rule of the evil “*Tāghūt*” regime, about 20 theologians including myself, were exiled for a period of three years each. After the three years had passed and they released the gentlemen, three of them returned to Qum and changed into more luxurious houses. When the Imām came to know of this, he sent a message from Najaf asking that the gentlemen not indulge in excesses and by their actions, not make the people skeptical of their virtuous ancestry. He reminded them that when the renowned Shaykh Anṣārī departed for his heavenly abode he had a

¹ The house of the Imām was like the dwelling of the poorest residents of Najaf: *le Monde* journalist; *ibid.*, p. 52.

² I do not want the car: Ḥujjat al-Islām Furqānī; *Mirror of Virtue*, p. 148.

sum of just seven tomans (about a dollar) worth of assets and so they should not indulge in excesses and give a bad name to their virtuous ancestry.¹

He would sit on the bare floor

Āyatullāh Khomeinī was a person whose call to arise would be heeded by millions of Iranians that would pour out from their homes onto the streets within minutes of his call. Despite this one could easily be received in his presence either in his workplace or his place of residence and find him sitting on the bare floor with a small table placed in front of him. This was all the furniture and fixtures of his workplace.²

True piety

I saw true piety in the life of the Imām with my own eyes. On the day of migration from Iraq to Kuwait, the Imām stated: “Ahmad, give me my clothes.” When the suitcase of the Imām was opened I did not see anything other than a single robe and cloak, a shirt, an undergarment and a towel. It was there and then that I realized that this leader and renowned religious authority who although would pay every month large sums of money in Iran and Iraq to the seminary students had nothing except this insignificant amount of clothing. This is a great lesson for the men of religion and morals as well as the authorities that it was with these outstanding traits that the Imām went to war against infidels and global arrogance and emerged victorious.³

Do they want to welcome Cyrus to Iran?

The innocent martyr Beheshtī called to say that for the arrival reception of the Imām from Paris to Tehran the following arrangements had been made:

1. The welcoming is to be extremely great and extensive and that Mehrabad airport was to be carpeted wall-to-wall.
2. The city is to be covered with lights and decorated
3. The Imām is to be taken by a helicopter from the airport to the Behesht-e-Zahrā burial ground because the massive crowd would make it dangerous to cover the distance with an automobile...

¹ Gentlemen, do not indulge in excesses: Muḥammad Ṣādiq Karbāschī Tehrānī, *ibid.*, p. 163.

² He would sit on the bare floor! Prof. Ḥāmid Algār, *ibid.*, p. 49.

³ True piety: Ḥujjat al-Islām Ferdowsipour, *ibid.*, pp. 143-144.

When I mentioned these arrangements to the Imām he stated: “Go and call Iran and tell the gentlemen that are they making arrangements to bring Cyrus to Iran! A clergyman had departed from Iran and that same clergyman is returning to Iran. I will not go to Behesht-e-Zahrā by helicopter.”

The subject was relayed back to Iran but Martyr Beheshtī was anxious that for instance the sheer size of the crowd did not God forbid cause any harm to the Imām and... again the report was communicated to the Imām and he stated: “I must be like the rest of the people even if I am crushed in a stampede...”¹

He would tidy his own room

When the Imām arrived in Paris, he himself took upon the chore of tidying his own room and however much we would plead with him to allow others to do the job, he refused to allow. During his stay at Neauphle le-Château, like always he lived a simple and unpretentious life. Despite the fact that journalists from the most widely-circulated newspapers of the world had a tough competition with one another and would publish the photo of the Imām on their first pages, yet the Imām made no changes in his living style and continued to shun protocol.²

Simplicity of the Imām attracted me to him

More than anything else it was the simplicity of the Imām that attracted me to him. In Paris the Imām lived in a small house that had just two rooms, one of which was the bedroom and the other his office room where he received people. In his living, one saw no evidence of rugs and valuable items. His eating habits were also very simple meaning that it included some amount of rice and milk. The tent in which he held the congregation prayers was also very simple.³

The only furniture in the house was a small table

When the Imām is not busy working in the Fayḍiyyah theological School or not receiving guests, he goes to the home of his relative located on #16, Yakhchāl Qāḍī Street. This is a white single-storied mud and straw house

¹ Do they want to welcome Cyrus to Iran? Ḥujjat al-Islām Ferdowsī-Pūr, *ibid.*, p. 144.

² He would tidy his own room: “*Ittilā‘āt*” newspaper journalist on assignment in Neauphle le-Chateau: extracts from the Biography of Imām Khomeinī, vol. 2, p. 144.

³ The simplicity of the Imām attracted me to him: Professor Monty (of France), *Mirror of virtue*, p. 187.

that was perhaps built a hundred years ago. This house is located in a narrow street in the center of the city of Qum and consists of a courtyard with a small pool. The walls of the house are covered with grapevines. The only piece of furniture of note in his house is a wooden table that he had used for years.¹

Will he come without any prearrangement?

After the Revolution, a woman journalist from London arrived in Qum and because she knew me from the time I was in London, she came to our house and asked me to arrange an interview for her with the Imām. I spoke on the telephone with the late Mr. Ishrāqī and told him that this lady had many questions to ask and wants to ask certain questions from the Imām. He did not agree. One night the Imām came to my house and by sheer coincidence, the journalist was also present. When the Imām entered, all her problems were resolved and she said: “I am surprised that he came here on his own! I agreed and said that he even went to the houses of the seminary students without any formality. She said: “That same person who has created so much controversy got up and came here without protocol?” She who had seen the protocol of the royalty before became a great fan of the Imām.²

We will journey with this same car

When he was in Qum, many nights he would visit the homes of the families of martyrs and theologians of the seminary. One night we planned to visit the home of one of clergymen whose house was located in a narrow lane in which big and ordinary cars could not enter. Beforehand we inspected the lane and concluded that except for a small car like the “Jyān”, no other car could enter that narrow lane. Thus we arranged for a small “Jyān” car and started off with the Imām. In a subsequent visit we again sat in the same car and came out of that narrow lane. One of the brothers had arranged for a ‘Paykān’ car and the Imām was asked to sit in the other car because the small car was not in good condition and the weather also was hot. The Imām stated: “This car is moving and there is nothing wrong with it. We will journey with this car.”³

¹ The only furniture in the house is a small table: quoted from “Time” magazine of America; extracts from the Biography of Imām Khomeinī, vol. 2, p. 50.

² Will he come without any prearrangement? Aḥmad Ṣābirī Hamadānī, *ibid.*, p. 140.

³ We will journey with this same car; Muḥammad ‘Alī Anṣārī, *Mirror of Virtue*, pp. 55-56.

On the same level as the living standard of the lower strata of society

The living standard of the Imām from the point of view of food, housing, use of personal means and other affairs of living was lower than the standard of living of the lower strata. Although he was leader of a regime and a political and global figure, yet he was not prepared to take even the smallest step towards increasing his personal wealth. In procuring the necessities of living for the Imām, we were constantly worried lest we procure an item that was expensive and he would find fault and be displeased. Many times it occurred that the Imām would take us to task because of certain issues such as painting his house, excessive consumption of water and electricity or improper utilization of household appliances.¹

Do not use decorations

Although the Ḥusayniyyah of Jamārān was not too much his personal domain and all changes made to it ultimately was in the name of Imām Ḥusayn (‘a), yet the Imām did not permit changes be made to it in order to beautify and renovate it. Even when Mr. Imām Jamārānī wanted to whitewash the place the Imām stated: “If you want me to stay here, don’t renovate and beautify it.” Once the Imām came to know that they wanted to decorate it with traditional tiles. He got angry and stated: “I will leave this place.” For this reason the Ḥusayniyyah remained as it was until the end.”²

These houses were rented

The office of the Imām was about three or four square meters in which all meetings with both foreigners and locals would take place—and the presidents also came to this room. In other words, the Imām was showing how he lived. Until the Imām departed to his heavenly abode, these houses were rented and the Imām paid their rent.³

¹ On the same level as the living standard of the lower strata of society: *ibid.*, p. 56.

² Do not use decorations: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*, p. 71.

³ These houses were rented: Ḥāj Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, p. 91.

Two underpants, two shirts

The Imām did not have more than two underpants and two shirts. His spouse would say “He has only these two shirts. But he was always clean and orderly and they must be changed every alternate day.”¹

Simple, yet clean and tidy clothing

The Imām’s worldly possessions included a pair of spectacles, a small radio, a suitcase of clothes and a several books. Actually his entire life was managed with absolute austerity and contentment while at the same time order and discipline prevailed throughout his life. Observance of hygiene and cleanliness was considered to be his main emphasis. His clothes were simple, neat and clean. The Imām was exemplary in all his tasks while his words and actions matched perfectly.²

What an amazing human being he was!

After the demise of Imām Khomeinī, professor Mell (specialist orthopedist) of Germany came to Iran whom I also went to visit because of my leg problem. After diagnoses, when he came to know of my identity, he proposed that we sit down and engage in dialogue. The topic revolved round the Imām and the professor who was intensely influenced by the simplicity of the home and lifestyle of the Imām asked whether the rest of our authorities also lived as simply as him. The reply came that of course not as simply as him because Imām Khomeinī was an exception. At that meeting he repeatedly expressed his admiration for the Imām and would say: “What an amazing human being he was, with this simple lifestyle he changed the whole world.” He lamented he had not met the Imām while he was still alive.³

Let this place to remain as simple as it is

I remember that on the fortieth day of the departure of the Imām to his heavenly abode, two French pastors came to Jamārān. When they saw the simple Jamārān Ḥusayniyyah meaning the place the Imām held his meetings, they were very shocked and told me that: “Let this place remain as simple as

¹ Two underpants, two shirts: Dr. Riḍā Thaqafī, *ibid.*, p. 76.

² Simple and yet clean and tidy clothes: Dr. Sohrāb-Pūr, *ibid.*, p. 113.

³ What an amazing human being he was! Muḥammad Jihād Karrūbī, *ibid.*, p. 164.

it is so that the world knows the place where a spiritual human being of his greatness lived and the place where he hosted the visitors.”¹

Devotion and Piety

There should be no mention of my name

The Imām wrote a book entitled “*Kashf al-Asrār*”. This book is unfortunately resembles the title of a book that one of the sons of a religious authority had compiled entitled “*Asrār-e Hezār Sāleh*” (mysteries of a thousand year) in which he had ridiculed religious beliefs of Shi‘ite and had insulted the clergy, Imāmate and all of these subjects. Out of a sense of responsibility for the condition of Islam, the Imām all at once cancelled all his lectures, debates and studies and everything else at the Theological School in order to write a response to this book. From what I gathered and recall, he kept aside all his activities for a full forty days and wrote a book entitled “*Kashf al-Asrār*” in rejection of the misguided book. Moreover, in order that there was no semblance of self-glorification, the first and second editions of the Imām’s book do not even mention that the book is authored by the exalted Imām implying that the name of the author is not at all relevant in this book and it is book that has solely been written in response to the book “*Asrār-e Hezār Sāleh*.” This discovery reveals his devotion in this position that although he wrote the reply but because he did not want anybody to say that for example, what was the position of the rejoinder; he ordered that there should be no mention of his name in the book.²

He cancelled his lectures

One day on the way to the Fayḍiyyah Theological School, the Imām noticed a commotion among a large gathering of seminary students over a book “*Asrār-e Hezār Sāleh*”. Thus after arranging for the book and reading it, he cancelled his lessons and within a period of one to two months, he compiled the book “*Kashf al-Asrār*” in rejection of the controversial book and in order to abstain from self-glorification, the book was published anonymously.³

¹ Let this place as simple as it is: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*, p. 71.

² There should be no mention of my name: Āyatullāh Faḍīl Lankarānī: Extracts from vol. 3, p. 208.

³ He cancelled his lectures: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, p. 207.

Why shouldn't I participate in his congregation prayer

One of the Friday Prayer leaders of Qum was opposed to the Imām in relation to political and probably philosophical stances. But the Imām would occasionally participate in congregation prayers led by him and would accept his authority. God is witness that there was no intention at all as he would state: "The political thinking of so and so person is not compatible with mine. If he has made a mistake but I have not made a mistake in my job; so why shouldn't I participate in congregation prayers led by him?"¹

I cannot make the intent to proximity

A sermonizer from the city of Hamedan who was a good man in the area went to Qum to visit his brother who was a student of the Imām. I along with the late martyr Shāhābādī went to the Imām and told him that such and such person had come from Hamedan. We also stated to the Imām that he was a good man who had taken part in the struggle and made a lot of effort during the struggle and that it was appropriate that he should meet him. The Imām stated: "I am keeping well." The late Shāhābādī pleaded that his brother was his student and that he himself was also a devoted admirer of the Imām who had also taken part in the struggle so that it was befitting that he should meet him. Again the Imām stated: "I said that I am not keeping well and have fever; however my fever is not so high that I cannot go to the house of this person and meet that man. But because I cannot make the intent to proximity after you mentioned that this man had done such a thing and is my admirer, for this reason I won't come." The late Shāhābādī became silent while my faith in the Imām increased.²

We investigated for thirty years

With the argument that takes place among the seminary students and the clergy by which they do not grant acceptance to any person quickly, and they make a microscopic examination of the actions of the religious authorities especially if that person is in the stage of establishing a family and conferring him with the title of 'source of emulation'. However, as much as we scrutinized the behavior, actions and public relations of the Imām in the

¹ Why shouldn't I participate in his congregation prayers? Āyatullāh Mujtabā 'Arāqī, *ibid.*

² I cannot make the intent to proximity: Hujjat al-Islām Tehrānī, *ibid.*, p. 224

course of almost thirty years of acquaintance, we did not notice any unholy motive in his actions.¹

It is the carnal spirit that invites

When I was in Najaf, I remember hearing complaints from some individuals that the Imām was not receiving them very warmly. I mentioned this to late Ḥāj Āqā Muṣṭafā to tell the Imām to receive these individuals more warmly. He replied that he had reminded the Imām so many times about this subject and the Imām had stated: “This is among the promptings and conspiracies of Satan. It means that in reality it is the carnal spirit that summons me to be warmer with individuals so that the number of my admirers increases. However in order to make the matter ambiguous, Satan says that this for the cause of God and Islam! Therefore I cannot do as you say.”²

Should I now become a polytheist?

In Najaf some of the clergy and the people would complain to the Imām that why he was not being warm and cordial with some of his friends. For instance they would say that when two ayatollahs meet each other, they bow and become cordial with one another. The Imām would state: “I worked hard and toiled in the course of forty years so that I became a monotheist; now I should come and become a polytheist and prostrate in front of you and the gentlemen the clergy)?!”³

Endeavor to create a spirit of devotion

The attitude of the Imām differed from that of others. The attitude of others was that the closer a person got to them; the more he was looked after. But in case of the Imām, the closer a person was to him, the less attention was paid to him. Even if an ordinary cleric came to meet him, the Imām would accord him more respect whereas if for example, his own children or one of us who was very close to him entered, he would not react in such a way that we would feel we were close to him and create expectations in us. He would endeavor to create a spirit of devotion in us.⁴

¹ We investigated for thirty years: Mūsawī Khoeynīhā, *ibid.*, p. 213

² It is the carnal spirit that invites: Ḥujjat al-Islām Muwahḥidī Kermānī Extracts from... vol. 3, pp. 224-225.

³ Should I now become a polytheist? Ḥujjat al-Islām Furqānī, *ibid.*, p. 225.

⁴ Endeavor to create a spirit of devotion: Ḥujjat al-Islām Nāṣirī, *ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

What reply can we give to the Messenger of Allah?

In Najaf, some people wanted to adopt a style known as observance of hierarchy of the revered sources of emulation of Shi'ites so that with this excuse they could disregard the social position and standing of the Imām. This issue was extremely disagreeable to friends. I along with two others were selected on behalf of all the friends to go to the Imām and inform him of such an issue. I who have a gift for talking quickly told the Imām that every environment had its own customs and traditions and apparently, observance of customs and traditions is not forbidden by religion and that the position of his holiness was such that he belonged to all Muslims and this position must be safeguarded for Islam whereas with the plan that the gentlemen (clergy) had, they intended to disregard his position or God forbid, defame him. Thus I requested him that based on the customs and traditions governing the environment, not to accept the plans of the gentlemen. When our dialogue ended, he narrated a story that we felt humbled and ashamed in relation to his spiritual greatness. The Imām stated: "In the past when there was no electricity and the lanes were dark, one of the gentlemen was going somewhere and as was customary, a person holding a lantern walked ahead of him. Incidentally, he was going to a gathering where another gentleman was also going. On the way when they encountered one another, this man distanced himself a little bit from the other in order to make it known that he had an exalted stature and a personal lantern carrier." After narrating this incident he stated: "If on the Day of Resurrection we are lined up in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and asked about such things, then do the gentlemen have a reply to give to a question that for example, 'this person should be ahead or that person should walk behind or that this one should go earlier and that one later? These credentials that the gentlemen take into consideration, if in that line-up His Holiness the Messenger (ﷺ) asks us a question, then do we have a reply to give?" thereafter he stated: "Implement the plan that they have prepared."¹

These designations must be removed

In keeping with the traditions in Najaf, when the book "*Tahrīr al-Wasīlah*" was published, at the back cover of the book, designations such as "grand ayatollah" or 'Head of the Theological Schools' and so forth would be written. This was not something new and no one was to be blamed and the

¹ What reply can we give to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)? Āyatullāh Qādirī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 235.

printers and publishers had acted in the same way as they had with regard to the rest of the religious authorities. When the Imām came to know of the subject with total decisiveness, he prevented its distribution stating that: “These designations must be removed.” The relevant publishers were ultimately forced to back down and erase the title from the book.¹

I don’t have money; ask him to pay back the loan

In Iraq when the question of my marriage came up, my financial condition was not good and my connection with Iran was not well-established. About this matter, I told Mr. Riḍwānī if he could take a loan of five-hundred Iraqi Dinars (equivalent to ten-thousand tomans) for me from the Imām. He communicated the matter to the Imām who stated: “Give him a two-month loan of five-hundred dinars and take back the money at the beginning of each month.” I took the money and made preparations for my marriage. It was nearing the completion of the two-month period the Imām sent a message through Mr. Riḍwānī that: “Tell so and so that his two-month period was about to end and that he must pay back the loan as I do not have money.” Really it was amazing for me that if there was any other person in place of the Imām, he would have done whatever he could for a person like me who had done so much for him. But the Imām wanted that both his devotion as well as ours be safeguarded and thus I had no alternative but to pay back the loan of the Imām right at the conclusion of the two months.²

Islam was the criteria

The loftiest ethical value of the Imām was his criteria of passion and hatred in relation to individuals, piety and service to Islam. The Imām even measured the love he had for his wife and children with this yardstick.³

Tearful face

When he would visit the shrines in Najaf or Kāzīmāyn, the Imām would not recite all the supplications like others did in the shrine so that the people would notice. On Thursday nights when we would visit the shrine, he would return home and recite the “*Kumayl*” supplication in the house; or when we would return from the mosque, he would go to his room, shut the door from

¹ These designations must be eliminated: Āyatullāh Qādirī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 235.

² I don’t have money; ask him to repay his loan: Ḥujjat al-Islām Nāṣirī, *ibid.*, p. 217.

³ Islam was the criteria: Āyatullāh Banī-Faḍl, *ibid.*

inside, put off the light for about fifteen minutes and engage in exclusive forms of worship. Once when I returned with the Imām from the mosque I saw that the Imām had disappeared. The lock on the door of the upper room hung in such a manner from the door that I thought the door was locked. I thought the Imām had left the house and asked the attendant of the house about the whereabouts of the Imām. He replied that the Imām had climbed the stairs to the upper room but when I went there I saw that the room was locked and the lights were off. Āyatullāh Tabrīzī had also arrived to meet the Imām. Again the attendant mentioned that the Imām was upstairs and I replied; “By God he is not there and room is locked.” I heard the Imām call from inside the room that: “Mr. Forman, I am here; don’t shout!” then he got up, unlatched the door which he latched from inside. I asked the Imām why he sat in the darkness. The switch was near the door and as soon as I put on the light I saw the Imām in prostration. He asked: “What do you want?” the Imām was reciting certain supplications in that position which we could not understand; but when he raised his head from prostration I saw that his face was tearful and the place of prostration was soaked with tears.¹

Written by

One of the students of the Imām took upon himself the responsibility of publishing the book “*Makāsib-e Muḥarramah*” (Illicit earnings). At the end of the book the Imām had not written his own name. When he was told to write the name of the author of the book, he stated: “Not at all! It is not necessary. The contents are important.” I pleaded with him but he did not agree and finally stated: “It is not necessary. If it is to be printed in this way, well and good otherwise let it not be printed.” Finally, I hit upon an idea and requested him to at least write his name in the book so that those who have any questions will know whom to refer it to and it becomes evident who has written it. He stated: “Well, if this is the case, I will write.” He wrote: “This book been written with the hand of a mortal by the name of Rūḥullāh al-Mūsawī al-Khomeinī.”²

Tell him that I have not become a polytheist as yet

The Imām would receive the news of Najaf through a group of us clergymen. On the orders of the Imām, this group would gather the news and report to him without making any alterations. Even minor subjects would be reported

¹ Tearful face: Ḥujjat al-Islām Furqānī, *ibid.*, p. 215.

² Written with the hand of a mortal: Āyatullāh Mas‘ūdī Khomeinī, *ibid.*, p. 210.

to him such as when we told him that a person was saying that his turban and his beard was small and was not at the level of a Source of Emulation, to which he stated: “Tell that gentleman that I have not become a polytheist as yet.”¹

He was a gift from God

When the news of the martyrdom of Ḥāj Āqā Muṣṭafā was received, everyone gathered to discuss how to narrate this event to the Imām and give him the news because out of the intensity of sorrow no body dared to report it to the Imām. Aḥmad Āqā was restless as was evident from his shadow that was cast from the window onto the glass. The Imām was sitting in the room and came to know what had happened. He called out to Ḥāj Aḥmad Āqā who answered and the Imām said: “Come and tell me what has happened?” Aḥmad Āqā broke down and cried. Naturally it was difficult to control but the Imām with his characteristic strength, only uttered “We are from Allah and unto Him is our return; this was a gift from God; today he took it back. Now get up and make preparations and see where we must go to take delivery of his body and where we must bury him.”²

There was no difference between ‘outside and inside’ of the house

What was most important was the sincerity and devotion of the Imām. The Imām behaved in the same manner at public and private gatherings as inside the house. It made no difference. He would mention a subject in the same manner both among the people and inside the house. There was no difference between his private and public appearances. Of course at home, he would engage in arguments and play games with the children.³

Diligence in matching words with action

My brother Ḥāj Āqā Riḍā Thaqaḥī would say: “One day he was received by the Imām who gave him a letter which was to be handed to the IRIB authority for broadcasting throughout the network. I handed the letter to the relevant authority. A few minutes later, the Imām called me and stated: “Go and bring back the letter immediately.” I brought back the letter. The Imām

¹ Tell him that I have not become a polytheist as yet: Ḥujjat al-Islām ‘Amīd Zanjānī, *ibid.*, p. 275.

² He was a gift from God: Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *ibid.*, pp. 197-198.

³ There is no difference between ‘inside and outside’ the house: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, p. 259.

changed a few words and again handed me the letter and stated: “Now give it to the news broadcasting network.” I did as I was told and then went to the Imām and asked him what was wrong with the letter. The Imām stated: “In the letter I had written that I pray for the Baseej volunteers with all my attention whereas this was not right and so I wrote that I pray for the *Basij* volunteers with my maximum attention.”¹

Standing to prayer at the level of sufficiency over obligation

The quality of standing for mandatory congregation prayer of the Imām in Jamārān before the break of fasting at dusk and in meetings with the government authorities that was broadcast live from the television network that revealed the level of sufficiency over obligatory duties of mandatory prayers were a manifestation of his distancing from hypocrisy.²

Good Moral Behavior and Behavioral Attributes

Abstinence from sin right from the beginning of adolescence

Right from the beginning of adolescence the Imām firmly believed that one must not backbite. Even when we his students would sit in his presence, we didn’t dare to gossip about any person because with a stern look he would nip us in the bud. In these instances, he had an exceptional dignity.

The Imām firmly believed in a few things including standing for congregation prayer immediately after the call to prayer, reciting the optional pre-dawn prayer and not indulging in backbiting. His friends would recount that during his youth when he was still unmarried, he would avoid committing even the minor sins.³

He would not sit among gossipers

What everyone unanimously agrees upon is that the Imām was never willing to sit at a gathering of gossipers, liars and sinners. From the beginning the Imām had an intense aversion for lies and backbiting. From the beginning he

¹ Diligence in matching words with actions: ‘Alī Thaqafī, *ibid.*

² Standing to prayer at the level of sufficiency over obligation.

³ Abstinence from sin right from the beginning of adolescence: Āyatullāh Martyr Mahallātī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 292.

would either not sit at a gathering of gossipers or would stop a conversation that resembled backbiting.¹

Gossip, never!

I say this from close observations that the Imām was extremely sensitive and careful that God forbid, the smallest religious tenets were not abused. There is no one who can claim to have seen the Imām in a gathering of gossipers let alone God forbid, indulge in backbite about any person.²

Nobility of spirit in attitude towards opponent

When I was at the Dār ash-Shifā' Theological School, my study chamber was next to that of the Imām. There was a theologian who would come from the Fayḍiyyah Seminary to the Dār ash-Shifā' Theological School. However, as soon as he would reach my chamber, he would go no further. He was not willing even to make eye contact with the Imām or his chamber because he was strongly opposed to mysticism and philosophy and disagreed with the ideas of the Imām. When at a meeting the Imām was told that so and so person had such opinions about him and would sometimes speak against him, he stated: "I forgive whatever he has said about me. I hope his backbiting and slandering causes God to pardon my wrongdoings as well as to result in his guidance."³

I never heard even a semblance of gossip

I was with my eminent mentor the leader of the Revolution, Imām Khomeinī for thirty years. I swear by my soul that this eminent personality never uttered a phrase that resembled backbiting. I won't forget once for delivering a speech, he came to the Salamāsī Mosque and why he was out of breath, he stated: "By God I have never been afraid so much" and added, "I have not come to deliver a speech, I have come give some talk." I who attend his lectures for around ten to fifteen years had never heard make an audacious remark to the seminary students. But while he was in this condition he stated: "If you don't have knowledge; if you don't have a mind; if you don't have religion then be sensible and stop making a mess of human identity." Then

¹ He would not sit among gossipers: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*

² Gossip, never! Āyatullāh Zanjānī, *ibid.*

³ Nobility of spirit in attitude towards opponent: Āyatullāh Sayyid Ḥasan Badlā, *ibid.*, p. 325.

he returned to his residence and his malt fever rebounded and for three days he was down with malt fever and stayed at home.

All these conditions were because he had heard that one of his students had gossiped about one of the respected theologians. The Imām himself had not gossiped, rather one of the seminary students had gossiped in the absence of one of the religious authorities but the Imām had become anxious and his breathing had suffered.¹

No one dared to gossip or even make a snide remark

The Imām had a lot of patience. I who was with him for years from dawn to dusk never heard hi get angry at anybody even once or express his discomfort. Despite this, no one dared to even make a snide remark about any body.²

Wary of meetings that caused skepticism

The Imām was truly peerless when it came to working hard to the extent that I remember and have heard from his friend and classmate of the time of his youth and seminary days that he never passed his time in useless pursuits or as is well known among seminary students in “informal chat sessions of the seminary students” that often involved gossip and disparaging a believer and enduring laughter that killed the spirit and made one to become distanced from God. Rather, if at all he would be compelled to attend such sessions, he would either intensely put a stop to any dialogue that might lead to a gossip or slandering of a pious believer and such matters or would immediately leave that session.³

Islam ruled the Imām’s heart

In order to delve into the time of adolescence of the Imām, I sought information from some of his friends of the time of his youth who unanimously agreed that even during the critical period of youth; the Imām never committed a single transgression. For instance, in the informal meetings that would be organized and they would wisecrack just for fun, if there was hint of gossip, the Imām would immediately get angry and remind

¹ I never heard even a semblance of gossip: Āyatullāh Mazāhirī, *ibid.*, p. 297.

² No one dared to gossip or even make a snide remark.

³ Wary of meetings that caused skepticism: Ḥujjat al-Islām Rasūlī Maḥallātī, *ibid.*, p. 293.

that gossiping was an abominable sin and was not permissible to engage in it. Islam ruled the heart of the Imām profoundly.¹

He possessed an exceptional moral behavior

The Imām was exception from the viewpoint of moral behavior. Perhaps for around 25 to 30 years, he would participate with late Āyatullāh Zanjānī in the lectures at the Fayḍiyyah Theological School but he would always walk behind him. Not even once he was observed to have walked in front of him.²

He was not in pursuit of the altar and the mosque

At a time when one of the manifestations of the personality of a qualified religious authority was that he held his congregation prayer in a big and well-known mosque or in the vicinity of the Holy shrine of Ma‘ṣūmah in Qum, and have a larger congregation for prayers, while the Imām’s lectures held at the Salmāsī Mosque close to Yakhchāl Qāḍī lane, was filled with the most studious seminary students and theologians, yet for leading the congregation prayer, he never pursued the altar and mosque. Only a limited number who would reach his humble residence at dusk succeed in standing to congregation prayer with the Imām.³

If there was a quarrel, he would keep silent

Where academic debates were involved the Imām was absolutely diligent and capable of holding his own in debates and would analyze the subjects in a very meticulous fashion and give his answer to problems. However, in session in which debating would be a cause for vanity and argument, he would keep silent. If anybody asked a question he would answer otherwise he would keep quiet and listen.⁴

Usual respect for friends

At the get together that the Imām would participate with his friends, he would always make them walk ahead while he would come from behind and in this way show his respect for his friends. This circumstance did not occur

¹ Islam ruled over the Imām’s heart: Āyatullāh Fāḍil Lankarānī, *ibid.*, p. 293.

² He possessed an exceptional moral behavior: Āyatullāh Bahā’uddīnī, *ibid.*, p. 252.

³ He was not in pursuit of the altar and the mosque: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmiyān, *ibid.*, p. 219.

⁴ If there was an argument, he would keep silent: Āyatullāh Ibrāhīm Amīnī, *ibid.*, p. 216.

once or twice; rather, it was a twenty-year old habit that I myself was a witness to. The Imām had an astounding immensity of spirit.¹

What should I do with the evil of temptations?

At times when the theologians would arrive in Qum from the provincial towns and cities, it was customary for the theologians and qualified religious authorities to visit them. However, the Imām would visit only those with whom he was acquainted and sometimes when we would propose that he visit, he would not accept. One day I asked him whether visiting and expressing one's affection to individuals wasn't a part and parcel of Islamic etiquette to which he replied in the affirmative. I then asked him whether Islamic etiquette must not be put into practice to which he again replied in the affirmative. I continued telling him that we expected him to practice Islamic etiquette not for the sake of public relations or hypocrisy but rather for the sake of God to which he stated: "Yes, it is right that I must do such a thing, but what must I do with the evil of temptations?" Whereas some individuals would perhaps construe his behavior as pride although it was not so. In those very days I fell ill and was bedridden for about one month in the chamber of the Hujjatiyyah Seminary. Throughout this one month, the Imām would visit me in my chamber every Wednesday although I was no more than an unknown seminary student.²

He sent money through another person

Years before the Revolution, one of the prominent religious authorities was having a very hard time after the demise of his father. The Imām sent a sum of one-thousand tomans (a lot of money in those days) to him through a third person so that he wouldn't know that the Imām had sent him the money.³

He went to the clinic unaccompanied

At the same time that he was a father figure for the entire theological school and his students, but he would act like a friend with individuals and would not show any negative reaction to a word of good. He would listen to everybody and if it was good, he would implement it whereas if it was not good, he would pay no attention. One day a dentist came to the residence of

¹ Usual respect for friends: Āyatullāh Bahā'uddīnī, *ibid.*, p. 251.

² What should with the evil of the soul of temptations? Āyatullāh Ibrāhīm Amīnī, *ibid.*, p. 223.

³ He sent money through another person: Hujjat al-Islām Fakhām, *ibid.*, p. 226.

the Imām to check his teeth. The late martyr Muḥammad Muntazirī protested to the Imām that why he did not go to the clinic. The Imām listened to him and accepted his suggestion. Thereafter the Imām visited the clinic of the dentist on several occasions. In the method of teaching of the Imām one never noticed him to be overtaken with pride because of his knowledge. He would always remark that, “it is possible that it is this way and it is possible it is that way.”¹

I am not ready to listen

No affair would transform the Imām more than negligence of divine commandments especially if a person intended to indulge in gossip in his presence or wanted to insult the leaders of religion.

One day I was present when a person made a remark to a theologian and source of emulation about a topic that appeared to be insulting. The Imām reprimanded him firmly and became angry at him although that person was a staunch supporter of the Imām. The Imām never compromised with individuals when it concerned the divine commandments. Those closest to him never dared to hear a report that smacked of gossip or slandering because the Imām would state: “I am not ready to listen to these words.”²

I am not acquiescent that you gossip about a person in my house

When the residence of the Imām was besieged by the Ba‘athist forces, some people who were among the sources of emulation and thus were expected to enquire about the well-being of the Imām or at least call him up, did not even care to do so. Thus it was quite likely that some of the friends and companions of the Imām who were deeply disturbed would occasionally express their displeasure about them. The Imām stated to them: “Perhaps some of the friends will become a bit angry or a bit disappointed. But I am not acquiescent that you gossip about any person within the four walls of my house.”³

¹ He went to the clinic unaccompanied; Muḥammad Riḍā Sajjādī Iṣfahānī, *ibid.*, p. 250.

² I am not ready to these words: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*, p. 295.

³ I am not acquiescent that you gossip about a person in my house: Āyatullāh Khātām Yazdī, *ibid.*, p. 296-297.

Why are you slandering me in my house?

One day at noon when we were reciting obligatory prayers in his house, someone entered and began to distribute photographs of the Imām among the worshippers. When the Imām noticed this, he was extremely disturbed and with a firmness that was combined with displeasure and anger, protested saying “why are you slandering me in my own house. I will not permit such issues to be conducted here and that you do publicity for me.”¹

Forbidding distribution of photographs for propagation

The late Shaykh Naṣrullāh Khalkhālī sent one of the photographs of the Imām from Najaf to Lebanon that was printed in two small and large sizes. After the Imām came out from the shrine of Imām ‘Alī (‘a) and reached home, he went to the inner room. Mr. Khalkhālī took brought the photographs to the outer room. In the night, the Imām called out from the upper storey of the house that was connected to the inner room that: “Bring the photographs!” I said okay. Because the photos looked interesting, I got the urge to keep p. one for myself. As soon as I had got this feeling the Imām called: “Keep one of them.” After that as much as friends pleaded and urged me to take them from the Imām, he refused to give them stating: “I myself forbid the people from being worldly and this is worldliness.”²

Forbiddance of gossip and insult to theologians

The clergy and seminary students had devoted part of the day and night to holding discussions in the outer room of the Imām’s residence. At times in these discussions some of the clergymen would be criticized. They were disturbed as to why the Imām not only was not taking any action for the sources of emulation; rather he was also withdrawing himself. One day the late Ḥāj Āqā Muṣṭafā read out a message in which the Imām had stated: “I have heard that some people here are gossiping and making insulting remarks to theologians. I am not acquiescent that a person should gossip and make insulting remarks to individuals in this house.”³

¹ Why are you slandering me in my own house? Sayyid Maḥmūd Du‘ā’ī, *ibid.*, p. 223.

² Forbidding distribution of his photographs for propagation: Ḥujjat al-Islām Qarahī, *ibid.*, p. 220.

³ Forbiddance of gossip and insult to theologians: Ḥujjat al-Islām Tawassulī, *ibid.*, p. 294.

It is inconsiderate... why are you causing people to lose their job?

Once in the shrine of Imām Ḥusayn (‘a) the Imām was busy reciting the pilgrimage supplication when one of the attendants of the shrine removed the rug from under his feet. The Imām took his the prayer rug and the Shi‘ite book of supplication and sat down on the hard floor. Sometimes when the Imām wanted to enter the shrine they would deliberately sweep the floor and throw the dust in his direction. We too would not be able to breathe because the Imām would ask us to have nothing to do with them and let them to do their job. The reason for the behavior of the shrine attendants until the time when the attendant removed the carpet from under the feet of the Imām was that as soon as the theologians would come to the shrine, they would gather round them and would demand unnecessary sums from them whereas the Imām was not one to give such cash to them. So I told that attendant that: “I swear to God, I’ll make you suffer.” The Imām overheard me and stated: “It is inconsiderate; what have you got to do with him? Let people do their job; well they must take away the carpet of the shrine.” I said nothing doing and filed a complaint through the local government in which I mentioned that Shaykh Muḥammad had committed such an insulting act. He was immediately arrested. His wife and children rushed to the Imām’s residence and begged for mercy saying that he had failed to recognize that he was the Imām and now he would be thrown out of his job as he was their breadwinner. When the Imām came out of the house on his way to the shrine, ‘Ḥusayn’ the domestic servant of the Imām introduced the woman as being the wife of that shrine attendant. She too fell at the feet of the Imām and pleaded on behalf of her husband. The Imām said: “Leave her alone; why you are causing people to lose their job!”¹

Respecting the elder brother

On February 1, 1979, when the aircraft carrying the Imām landed at Tehran airport, Āyatullāh Pasandīdeh, the brother of the Imām went inside the plane to welcome the Imām. In keeping with his ethical outlook, he requested Mr. Pasandīdeh to disembark from the plane first because the Imām would never walk ahead of his elder brother. On the other hand, because of the political sensitivity of recording the historical moment when a large number of film cameras and projectors waited for the Imām to disembark and to shoot the arrival of the Imām to the country, it did not seem proper that Mr.

¹ It is inconsiderate... why are causing people to lose their job! Ḥujjat al-Islām Furqānī, *ibid.*, p. 327-328.

Pasandideh to walk ahead of the Imām. The Imām stated to his elder brother that, “You please disembark from the plane ahead of us otherwise I will not disembark ahead of you.” Thus, only a short while after Mr. Pasandideh had disembarked from the stairway did the Imām disembark from the aircraft.¹

Disposition and attitude in the mold of Prophet Muḥammad

The Imām truly behaved like in the mold of Prophet Muḥammad. Throughout our stay at his residence and most of the tasks we would undertake for him and despite the complicated surgery he had to undergo, he never showed the slightest annoyance. Because of the immense respect that we had for the Imām, we would tell him beforehand for example, either to sit or walk if he could etc... and he never protested. He always behaved most respectfully with us and I can say in fact, that he truly was an ideal patient. I cannot imagine another person would be able to earn such a position of Divine pleasure, tolerate pain, possess a fine disposition and yet not do something that might cause us to become displeased with him.²

He would be annoyed at being praised

I bear witness that the behavior of the Imām when the television network would shower praise on him and he would be hearing was such that he would cut off the sound of the television set and only after the broadcaster had finished praising him would he put it on again. The Imām basically disliked being praised.³

Don't sing my praise

Once along with colleagues from the High Court, we were received by the Imām and after we took leave from his presence, the Imām called me and when I returned he stated: “Mister so and so, I wanted to ask you not to sing my praise.”⁴

¹ Respecting the elder brother: Sayyid Mahdī Imām-Jamārānī, *ibid.*, p. 251.

² Disposition and attitude in the mold of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ): Dr. Kalāntar Mu'tamidī, *ibid.*, p. 288.

³ He would get annoyed at being praised: Zahrā Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*, p. 232.

⁴ Don't sing my praise: Āyatullāh Muḥammadī Gīlānī *ibid.*, p. 231.

Why is he praising me?

One day in one of my speeches before the Friday Prayer sermons, I spoke of an ordinary and frequent situation in the life of the Imām and that how in observation of economic issues, he was so thrifty that when he took a glass of water to drink and he drank some of it, he would not throw away the remaining water in the glass and would keep it for next time. On hearing my words over the radio, he complained to his honorable son Ḥāj Aḥmad Āqā that why so and so person had sung his praises and paid tribute to him.¹

I have pardoned him

In numerous instances, individuals who had gossiped or insulted the Imām personally and had later repented and taken back their words, would write a letter to his holiness seeking to be pardoned and amnestied. The Imām would be informed of all of them and he would without exception, state in all instances that “I have pardoned him.” Among them was a Muslim of Arab descent from America who wrote in a letter to the Imām that “By making an insulting remark about you, I have committed a grave sin and this sin stalks me in the form a horrific nightmare” and had pleaded him for his amnesty. When the Imām was informed of this, he stated in a tone that was filled with kindness and affection that: “I have pardoned him.”²

No, it is not necessary!

The Imām would come to Jamārān and after a speech; he would fill dried fruits and nuts for the fighters at the warfront with his own blessed hands. I would say: “Allow me to write at the back that these dried fruit and nuts have been filled by the Imām because it would boost the morale of the fighters.” However, he stated: “No, it is not necessary!”³

Pardoning and forgiveness of Imām Khomeinī vis-à-vis breach of etiquette

Among the lofty values of the Imām was his amazing pardoning and forgiveness of those that had wronged or insulted his person. The prominent examples were observed in some of the news media from the telegrams and letters of some of the eminent personalities. However, in addition to

¹ Why is he praising me? Ḥujjat al-Islām Anṣārī Kermānī, *ibid.*, p. 229.

² I have pardoned him: Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥammad Ḥasan Raḥīmīyān, *ibid.*, pp. 325-326.

³ No it is not necessary! Zahrā Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*, p. 226.

overlooking their breach of etiquette and use of foul language, the Imām would not permit even his devoted followers to come to his defense.¹ ✍

¹ Pardoning and forgiveness of Imām Khomeinī vis-à-vis breach of etiquette: Āyatullāh Banī Faḍl; *ibid.*, p. 226.

Part 3: Perfect Role Model

Discipline in Affairs

The Imām did not take up classes only for two days

The most important characteristic of the Imām was his discipline. Throughout my education, I never saw anybody as resolute and proficient as him. It never occurred that he give lectures without previous studies. He strongly believed in lectures. For instance, when he started a course in rational theology at the Salamāsī Mosque in Qum, that lasted for four and half years, throughout this period except for weekend holidays, he did not appear for lessons only for two days—one of which was due to indisposition.¹

Rūḥullāh is Rūḥullāh

For approximately eight years I attended the lectures on external jurisprudence and rational theology of the Imām. He would be punctual and always be present on the hour even when he was giving lectures at the Salamāsī Mosque in Qum. Some of his students would attend other classes before his lecture was due and for this reason they would sometimes be a few minutes late for the start of the Imām’s class. He would get upset and would sometimes rebuke them. It is well-known that the Imām himself during his days as a seminary student was disciplined and punctual. The late Āyatullāh Shāhābādī (the Imām’s spiritual guide) had said thus about the discipline and attendance of the Imām at the lectures: “Rūḥullāh is truly Rūḥullāh (spirit of God); I do not recall a single day when he was not in class after I had spoken

¹ He did not take up classes only for two days: Sayyid ‘Alī Ghayūrī: Extracted from the Biography of Imām Khomeinī, vol. 2, p. 32.

‘in the Name of Allah’. Always before I would begin the lecture in the name of Allah, he would be present.”¹

He would not delay even for a minute

Yet another characteristic of the Imām was that he gave great importance to his classes such that he would always be punctual and would not delay even for a minute. During the years of repression he would teach at the Fayḍiyyah Theological School. On one of the days when the ‘SAVAK’ secret police invaded the school, all the students attended and so did the Imām as was normal. When he were confronted with this scene, we thought that the classes would not be held on that day but contrary to our expectation, the Imām sat on the floor of the courtyard of the shrine of Her Holiness Ma‘šūmah and conducted the classes.²

Punctuality in attending classes

At times when the students were shoddy or were unpunctual in class attendance, or were undisciplined in the affairs of their living, he would be very troubled and repeatedly on certain occasions remind the students of this point that in the world those persons would attain their objectives and earn a living that were systematic and disciplined in life.³

By regulating time, the tasks become easier to handle

The Imām would quote his mentor the late Āyatullāh Shāhābādī who authored “*Jawāhir*” and would write a few pages of that book on every night. He had a son who was knowledgeable, virtuous and his favorite but who passed away. The burial rites were postponed by a day. At night the body was placed in a room while the writer of “*Jawāhir*” passed that night beside the body of his son and wrote the same number of pages of the book on that sorrowful night as on other nights. After narrating this incident the Imām would emphasize that men must work hard as well as regulate the tasks because with discipline and organizing the tasks became easier to handle.⁴

¹ Rūḥullāh is Rūḥullāh: Āyatullāh Banī Faḍl, *ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

² He would not delay even for a minute: Āyatullāh Nouri Hamadānī, *ibid.*, p. 33.

³ Punctuality in attending classes: Sayyid Ḥamīd Rūḥānī, *ibid.*, 29-30.

⁴ By regulating time, the tasks become easier to handle: Āyatullāh Qādirī, *ibid.*, p. 30.

We should tell him to become regular

One summer when the Imām was in Tehran, he participated in the congregations prayers led by Āyatullāh Sayyid Abu'l-Ḥasan Rafī'ī Qazvīnī. Mr. Rafī'ī was leading the dusk and night mandatory prayers in the Friday Mosque of Tehran, but he would not come regularly. One day when Mr. Rafī'ī came late, the Imām stood up and told the people who were participating in that congregation prayer that, "Come on and let us tell him to lead the prayers regularly. In this irregular manner that he comes, he wastes the time of many people. All of us together should tell him to hold the congregation prayers regularly."

After that Mr. Rafī'ī came and began to hold the prayers. After the prayers were ended, a person told him that: "A young man was telling the people to tell you to be punctual. He was almost protesting your unpunctuality." Mr. Rafī'ī responded saying: "Who was that man?" That man pointed to the Imām who was busy reciting prayers on the other side. As soon as Mr. Rafī'ī's eyes fell on the Imām, he stated: "He is Ḥāj Āqā Rūḥullāh. He is a man who is extremely learned, accomplished, extremely pious, disciplined and spiritually pure; he is right. If I come late again then request him to lead the prayers on my behalf."¹

Discipline even in solitary confinement

When after the Imām was arrested on the night of June 5, 1963, and taken to Tehran, for nineteen days, he was kept at a secret location and thereafter taken to a solitary confinement cell for 24 hours. The Imām himself would state that the length of the prison cell was four and half steps long and he would walk across the cell three times daily, each time lasting from half to three hours as was his normal everyday routine.²

Fourteen-year discipline in performing pilgrimage

During the period of his stay in Najaf it was the Imām's habit that at 2.30 AM past midnight and recently at 2.00 AM he would enter the outer yard from the inner room and receive the clergy and the people. Thereafter, at 3.00 AM he would go to visit the shrine of the Commander of the Faithful, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī ('a) and would read the dual supplications both standing and sitting and would return home after reciting the pilgrimage prayer. This was

¹ We should tell him to come regularly: Āyatullāh Ḥusayn Nūrī: *ibid.*, p. 30-31.

² Discipline even in solitary confinement: Maḥmūd Borūjerdī, *ibid.*, p. 18.

the program of the Imām throughout the fourteen-years of his stay in Najaf except on Friday nights in summer when after the dusk and night prayers, it was time to cleanse the shrine and on such times the Imām would not visit the shrine.¹

When the Imām visited the mausoleum

In Najaf, it was the Imām's habit to hold a meeting in the night after the dusk and night mandatory prayers in the outer room of his residence. Everyone was free to participate at these sessions; everybody could see him. After the meeting was over, the Imām would go to visit the shrine of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī ('a). The meeting would last until exactly 3 A.M. past midnight and after it was over he would visit the shrine. This was a routine task such that if a person wanted to adjust his timepiece he could easily do it either by waiting outside his residence on ar-Rasūl Street where he would appear at precisely 3 A.M. or when he would return from the mausoleum, one would know for certain that it was 3.30 A.M!²

Discipline in the Imām's visits to the mausoleum

On one of our visits to Iraq, we were sitting with a group of clergymen and theologians after the dusk and night prayers on the grounds of the mausoleum of His Holiness the Commander of the Faithful ('a). When the discussion was over and the men wanted to leave, they looked up at the timepiece and noticed a discrepancy in time. The clock of the mausoleum of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī ('a) that was in Arabic digits, showed that it was 2.30 A.M. (past midnight) that differed by five to seven minutes with the watches of the men. Right then the Imām entered the grounds from the door facing the 'Qiblah' direction of prayer. One of the teachers of Najaf who was present asked that they adjust their watches as it was now exactly 2.30 A.M. past midnight and that it was then thirteen years (thirteenth year of the Imām's stay in Najaf) since the Imām entered the grounds of the mausoleum every night at precisely the same time.³

¹ Fourteen-year discipline in performing pilgrimage: Sayyid Muḥtabā Rūdbārī, *ibid.*, p. 25.

² When the Imām visited the mausoleum: Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *ibid.*, p. 24.

³ Discipline in the Imām's visits to the mausoleum: Sayyid 'Abd al-Majīd Īrāvānī, *ibid.*

It is ten minutes to supper

The brethren had brought a film of the programs of the Revolution to France and they suggested that we tell the Imām to see it after supper. I went and told him that supper was ready and whether we should eat. The Imām looked at his watch and stated: “Now it is still ten minutes remaining to supper.” The day and night routine of the Imām was divided in such a manner that without seeing him, we could easily guess what the Imām was doing then.¹

Daily timetable

The Imām had a timetable for his daily tasks which he would prepare himself. In that timetable, the tasks to be performed at every hour of the day and night were included except for an hour of the night when he would awaken to recite the optional midnight prayers and recite supplications invoking God.²

Meticulous and routine discipline in programs

A person could adapt his living from the working hours of the Imām. The household of the Imām understood his living routine like a mechanical timepiece and thus they would adjust their programs on the basis of the Imām’s routine. They know exactly what time the Imām sleeps; what time he awakens; when he must take tea and what time he would come out for appointments.³

Meticulous weekly programs of the Imām

Apart from the order and discipline that he had in all his workings and plans, the Imām normally never concentrated on one job at the expense of another and to be negligent of the other. Every day each worship, recitation of the Qur’an, supplications, various kinds of studies, listening to the news or taking a stroll, warming up and doing physical exercises (that according to the opinion of his physician was necessary in order to safeguard his health), attending to and giving replies to religious affairs, granting permission and receiving religious taxes, meetings, consultations and socializing with members of the family, eating, personal hygiene and relaxation would be undertaken in an orderly manner and at the programmed time. This same

¹ It is ten minutes to supper: Mrs. Dabbāgh; *ibid.*, p. 9.

² Daily timetable: Ḥujjat al-Islām Anṣārī, *ibid.*, p. 7.

³ Meticulous and routine discipline in programs: Ḥujjat al-Islām Anṣārī, *ibid.*, p. 26.

discipline governed his weekly programs such that for example, every Friday morning after listening to the 8 A.M. news, he would prepare to go to the public bath.¹

If he had an appointment he would not revoke

The Imām observed a specific discipline. His tasks would be performed at specific hours meaning that he was extremely diligent about eating his meals at a specific hour, sleeping at a specific hour and waking up at a specific hour. If he had to attend to a job or had an appointment with a person he would never revoke it. One of the secrets to the success of the Imām was that he observed discipline in all affairs; and from his youth he had a reputation for being neat and organized. He was so organized and meticulous that for instance he ate his lunch at a specific hour and if he would be late by five minutes, the members of the household would worry why he was late by a few minutes. This meant that everybody would involuntarily be drawn to his room and would see for example, that Ḥāj Aḥmad had arrived and was asking a question from the Imām resulting in the Imām's delay.²

Optimum utilization of time

The Imām had a particular program for all hours of the day and night such that the time for study, worship and supplication, attending to affairs of Muslims and the Islamic state, sleep and even his personal affairs were all organized and scheduled. This resulted in him making optimum use of all hours of his blessed life and having a lofty spirit that is beyond description.

The Imām programmed his daily schedule in such a way that he not only read the morning and evening newspapers, rather, he also took note of all the printed matter published by the mass media such that he scrutinized all the radio and television programs and local publications.³

Discipline in daily program

The daily program of the Imām was very well-organized meaning that if we multiply his daily schedule with 365 days, his yearly program becomes known. The meetings and appointments begin from seven in the morning when he leaves his room and goes to his office. However, sometimes the

¹ Meticulous weekly programs of the Imām: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmiyān, *ibid.*, p. 6.

² If he had an appointment, he would never revoke it: Mrs. Farīdeh Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*

³ Optimum utilization of time: 'Alī Akbar Āshtiyānī, *ibid.*, p. 10.

physician gives him a check-up or at times individuals such as Mr. Rasūlī or Mr. Tawassulī are on hand when Mr. Anṣārī presents to him his daily work schedule. I am not present in the men's section to know what his programs are for the day but obviously it includes tying the wedding knot of couples and personal visits followed by meetings with officials from across the country or with ladies or any person who has work. When they have state duties with the Imām and the officials have taken appointments to discuss these tasks with him. After these tasks, at around 9 a.m. he returns from his office to the outer yard and takes a stroll. He walks for around half an hour until 9.30 A.M. and then goes to his room to do some reading of the bulletins and news reports that is sent from all over the country to him that are all confidential and are sealed and stamped. He believes in opening all of them himself and reads all of them. The reading continues until around quarter to ten in the morning. At quarter to ten they bring various kinds of seasonal fruits for him that he ate such as oranges, berries or lettuce. Then at 10:10 a.m. He would go to take a nap that would last until 11.30 a.m. (However God alone knows whether he is asleep or awake). At 11.30 a.m. he would wake up to prepare for the mandatory noon prayers meaning he would perform ablutions, recite the Qur'an followed by the optional and the mandatory noon prayers. At 13.05 noon, he comes for lunch while the ten minute interval after the prayers he utilizes to speak either to his offspring if they are around or we see him keep himself busy with reading following the morning studies. At 13.05 in the afternoon sharp he comes to his spouse for lunch. On all days his lunch is a traditional Iranian meal consisting of meat boiled with pulses and dried lime. If there is a change in menu, he does not like it too much because he relishes boiled meat with pulses and dried lime the most. However, he also eats rice with stew if cooked. Anyhow, he would eat something whereas for the rest of the household there is no boiled meat with pulses because this meal is reserved solely for him. Of course from the point of view of painstaking care he took for eating his meals, he would tie a towel around his neck that extends down to his lap and a tough nylon material is wrapped over it. Everything must be orderly; everything must be perfect. There is no deficiency from the disciplinary point of view of his lunch program meaning that if the plate beneath the bowl of stew is changed, he would ask the reason for it although it has no relevance to the food. He would keep only one plate beneath the bowl of stew and that plate would be permanently placed there. The bowl of food and the spoons are all exclusively for his use. After taking lunch, he would speak for a few minutes especially if we or the daughters and grandchildren would be around. Of

course throughout this time the radio set is with him and he listens to it. He listens to the proceedings of the parliament and makes it a point to listen to the speeches broadcast between one in the afternoon and 2pm. Before the 2pm news he would go into his own room and listen to the news. In the afternoon after analyzing the news reports, he would take rest and precisely at four o'clock in the afternoon, he would awaken and take tea. He would follow this with half an hour of walking during which he would utter invocations of course provided that there was no important news over the radio. However, if there was some important political state development, he would make it a point to listen to the radio. He had radio that had a lengthy band that he would wrap around his wrist and at times he would read the newspaper simultaneously. Sometimes he would utter invocations using the prayer bead he carried with him. Of course at this point his grandchildren gather around him, pull his hand and divert him but he says nothing. However, this is at such moments when he is not listening to the radio whereas if it is a special news situation he does not entertain them and nor does he allow us to talk to him and will continue to listen to the radio. At half past four in the afternoon, his strolling ends and he sips a cup of tea. However, if it is summer this schedule changes a little meaning that he does not always awaken at four and depends on the length of the day and night. If the days are long and after taking a walk he reads the various morning and evening newspapers. Among the topics that draw his attention is an editorial or speech that he believes he must read them alone. At times when he is tired or when we are around and have nothing much to do, he asks us to read them for him and we read some of the topics that he definitely wants us to read for him. Before sunset he again recites the Qur'an and then performs ablutions and again recites the Qur'an followed by preparations for the mandatory dusk prayer that is naturally accompanied with the optional dusk prayers. Most of the time he goes into the front yard to recite the prayers under open skies unless if the weather is cold and he feels he might catch cold and returns inside and continues with his reading. Of the books that he insists on reading are new-edition books that he gazes at intently, along with newspapers and magazines. When the television programs begin in the evening, he would put aside the radio and watch both the television channels. After reciting prayers and doing some reading, I do not recall exactly what he would do for another fifteen or twenty minutes. Perhaps he would tune in to the foreign networks until it was seven o'clock in the evening. He would listen to the news at 7 p.m. with such attention that he would only reply to our greeting and at most make eye contact meaning that we must keep quiet and if we are in the room

we must keep quiet and not talk even with each other because it would annoy him although he would not speak a word. Of course we would be considerate. After the news reports and broadcasts if at all there was any particular interview and speech, he would definitely listen to them. Naturally, the Imām also had some favorite programs while for example he disliked certain programs on family-related topics. Once when I was present and the program related to family issues was being broadcast, he would not watch it and switched off the television set. I asked him the reason and he replied that, "It is not all a good program." I asked why and he replied that it was very artificial and was not good at all. After listening to the news, he would exercise for around fifteen minutes by lying flat on the ground with a pillow under his head. As advised by the physician, he would raise his leg and bend them against his knees and again straighten them and would keep a count of the number of each movement. He would order dinner precisely at 9 p.m. however, since it took some time until dinner was ready and he was served, he would continue to watch the television. After dinner, he attended to himself and this would last until 10 p.m. at 10.10 p.m. he would go to his own room and awaken at 2.30 a.m. past midnight in order to recite the optional midnight prayers (once again in this case because of seasonal fluctuations, consequently, there would be some adjustments made in his night sleep and awakening timings). He would awaken at around 2.30 a.m. past midnight for reciting the optional night prayers until it was time to recite the dawn prayer. In the interval between the optional night prayers and the dawn prayer, and after having recited the optional night prayers, he would use the interval until the break of dawn to attend to a box in which religious verdicts that the office had replied was placed in them. Some of them that he needed to attend personally were put into a cardboard box by the office and presented to the Imām. The Imām would use this interval to take a look at them and read them after the dawn prayer. After the dawn prayer, he would rest until six in the morning and would then awaken, take a walk for half an hour followed by a recitation of the glorious Qur'an. Breakfast would be served precisely at 6.30 a.m. and he would finish his breakfast before 7 a.m. At 7 a.m. sharp, he would again go to his office.¹

¹ Discipline in program of a single day: Mrs. Zahrā Muṣṭafawī: *ibid.*, pp. 10-14.

I am able to control my thought

On our persistence that he narrate to us about his experiences in prison and in Turkey, he would systematically devote only ten minutes and no more each night to recount those experiences. This is because he had set aside this amount of time especially for this purpose and he would then go to bed and state: “Although I don’t feel sleepy but it is time to sleep.” I would remark that while he was still lying awake in bed, he would begin to think and worry and thus it was better that he narrates to us his experiences instead. To which he replied: “No, I am able to control my thinking.” I would respond by saying that if he rolled over for half an hour in bed, he could neither sleep nor also think to which he responded that: “I am able to control my thought.”¹

His walking was harmonized with invocation

Throughout his life, apart from the programmed invocations that he would chant, he would recite the Qur’an thrice daily. His invocations were harmonized with his walking program and if for instance, he wanted to walk for half an hour, he would busy himself with chanting of invocations. When his chanting invocations finished, he would also stop walking meaning that his half-hour stroll was not timed with a watch; rather it was timed with chanting of invocations.²

During recess you must indulge in recreation

When the Imām would see me being busy during holidays he would say: “It won’t get anywhere because at the time of recess you must indulge in recreation.” He said this in earnest to my son. This quote is from the Imām himself because he would repeat it to my son in my presence saying: “I neither devoted one hour of my recess for studies nor one hour of my studies for recreation.” This implied that he devoted every moment for a particular thing and he would advise my son also to engage in recreation as otherwise he would not be able to prepare himself for studying.³

Do not study during recess time

I remember that the Imām would always advise not to study during playtime and not to indulge in playful activities during study time. Each is to be

¹ I am able to control my thought: Mrs. Fāṭimah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *ibid.*, p. 14.

² His walking was harmonized with invocations: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 17.

³ During recess you must indulge in recreation: Mrs. Zahrā Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*, p. 31.

accomplished in its own time. Likewise, he would say that from childhood he remembered that he himself never exchanged the timing of one with the other and that these two were complementary activities.¹

Studying and Working Hard

Some times he would be hidden behind a stack of books

From the time that I remember, I would see the Imām among stacks of books. Sometimes it would happen that we would go to his room to take tea for him, we would see a large number of half-opened books lying all around him and he would be preoccupied with reading them. The Imām was at home for most of the time and was always busy studying and would only leave the house to teach an hour and half before sunset.²

He was fond of reading

The Imām was fond of reading and he still continued with the habit and would read a little until his eyes were fatigued. I remember during holidays when in summer we would either come to Tehran or go to one of the provincial cities, he would read such a large number of various books that those who were responsible for arranging the books for him began to complain. He had read most of the books of the world's great writers whether in the social or whether in the political fields. He was the most well-read theologian. He had studied the history of Iran frequently as well as the constitutional history.³

He would not go back to sleep after reciting prayers

As far as I can recall, the study time, the recreation time and working time of the Imām were separate because the Imām was basically a disciplined person and exercised discipline in all his tasks. Naturally, he was disciplined even in his reading habits. I remember from the time of childhood that he was fond of reading. From the time we would awaken in the morning, we would see

¹ Do not study during recess time: 'Āṭifah Ishrāqī: *ibid.*

² Sometimes he would be hidden behind a stack of books: Mrs. Farīdeh Muṣṭafawī: *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 333.

³ He was fond of reading: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī: *ibid.*, p. 334.

him awake and my mother would say that after reciting prayers, he would not go back to sleep.¹

He was absorbed in his books

The reading habit of the Imām was enormous. When I would enter his room, I would see absorbed in reading his books. He would be sitting with a table measuring one meter in height in front of him and the books lying all around him. He was concealed behind the stacks of books. For instance some would jokingly remark that, “The Imām has still not risen from his place!” when friends would come to visit, they would always find the Imām in that study room. Only when he wanted tea would he strike at the tumbler with a spoon. He would get up to eat his meals.²

He would not sleep for more than two or three hours every night

In addition to announcements, communiqués and speeches, the Imām would also write a large number of letters to all and every one. I won't forget that in the year 1962 in the provincial and religious councils incident, the late Hāj Āqā Muṣṭafā had said that the Imām would not sleep for more than two or three hours every night while the rest of the night he would be busy writing letters to the religious scholars of the territory. The Imām wrote hundreds of letters to the religious councils in which he would enlighten the theologians of the provincial towns.

Towns and cities of the dangers that had begun to threaten the world of Islam and the role played by Israel and America and that their objective was the elimination of Islam and such issues.

Some of the letters that the Imām wrote to the theologians would be printed and circulated and would be very effective and would cause an uproar. One of these letters concerning the incident of provincial and religious councils which I recall, was the letter that the Imām wrote to Mr. Falsafī. Mr. Falsafī read out that letter from the pulpit of the Ark Mosque in Tehran and I was present at that gathering when he said that, “But with regard to the letter of Āyatullāh Khomeinī...” the people listened intently and were aroused. The Imām's letter was such that it would agitate the people. At the end of the letter, the Imām wrote the Qur'anic *Sūrah* “*al-Fīl*” comprehensively. When

¹ He would not go back to sleep after reciting prayers.

² He was absorbed in his books: Ṣiddīqah Muṣṭafawī: *Ibid.*, pp. 335-336.

Mr. Falsafī recited this *Sūrah*, the people were aroused to such an extent that they recited the last verse of the Surah in a chorus.

For instance when Mr. Falsafī recited the word “Be aṣḥāb al-fīl”, “fī tanzīl”, the crowd would repeat the words in a chorus. This letter of the Imām took the form of a public song and created a huge storm.¹

He was either worshipping or reading

After the arrival of the Imām to Najaf, it took some time before his family joined him. The Imām resided in a humble and rented house. He resided in one section of the house while the other section served as an outer yard. In a 24-hour period, he would either be worshipping or busy reading. This orderly task was a great lesson for those that would visit the outer yard of the Imām’s residence and would see the Imām’s situation from close.²

He had read most of the famous novels

These days the Imām did not have the time to read novels and other such books. However, in bygone days, for instance when he was in Najaf, he would in fact read hundreds of pages of books everyday. He would bring a few novels or books on social issues and read ten pages of this and twenty pages of that book and so forth. He had read most of the famous novels. Now he would read either political or social books such as “*A Look at World History*”, *Nehru*, or historical books from beginning to the end! What I want to say is that the Imām read these sorts of books.³

Variety in reading

Reading and studying history or paraphrase and books on behavior as well as narrations are included in the Imām’s routine. Sometimes the Imām seeks these kinds of books and reads them at every opportunity.⁴

He would not be negligent for a second on issues concerning Iran

On matters concerning the struggle, when the Imām was in Najaf and was busy with teaching, he would not be negligent of the issues concerning Iran

¹ He would not sleep for more than two or three hours every night: Āyatullāh Khāmene’ī, *ibid.*, pp. 338-339.

² He was either worshipping or reading: ‘Abbās ‘Alī ‘Amīd-Zanjānī, *ibid.*, p. 336.

³ He had read most of the famous novels: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 334.

⁴ Variety in reading: Ḥujjat al-Islām Anṣārī, *ibid.*, p. 335.

even for a second; and because at that time we were responsible for political matters, he would always emphasize that we keep him informed of the news. He would closely follow the events in Iran. At times we would notice that the Imām would wake up at 12 o'clock at midnight and write a statement and at that very moment the brethren would covertly take away the statement and would either copy or print it, conceal it in a baggage and send it to Tehran. When he would be told that the statement had reached Iran safely, he would become happy.¹

Daily routine in the hard-working period in Paris

In addition to speeches and meetings with students and other strata of people that would take place daily while in Paris, the Imām personally included the following instances in his daily program: replying to religious questions and subjects, reading the translated newspapers, important analyses and reports of foreign newspapers, reading and analyses of news and reports received from Iran pertaining to the events of the Revolution and affairs of the country, going through the letters received from political and religious figures from inside and outside the country; replying to important letters; personal meetings with various individuals, giving interviews and responding to the queries of local and foreign journalists; writing messages and statements on various occasion in the course of the Revolution; performing the mandatory and optional religious duties and reciting an entire chapter of the glorious Qur'an daily at eight intervals and meeting with the family and members of the household.²

Daily program of the Imām in Paris

The daily program of the life of the Imām in Paris was that he would rest and sleep between four to six hours while the rest of the time he was constantly involved with his job. Normally, after the dawn prayers, he would begin recitation of the glorious Qur'an and studying the reports and news that continued until 8am. The Imām even replied to letters that poured in from all over the country. After taking lunch, he would rest for two hours and then get busy with work again and would continue until it was time for reciting the dusk and night prayers. After the mandatory prayers, he would work until

¹ He was not negligent even for a second on issues concerning Iran: Ḥujjat al-Islām Nāṣirī, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 271.

²Daily routine in the hard-working period in Paris, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 271.

midnight and according to those close to him, the Imām would go to bed to sleep and rest after 1 a.m. past midnight.¹

He would work day and night while in France

The Imām would work day and night while in France. Not a single day passed without him either giving a speech or declaration. Sometimes the interviewers would comment that they had never witnessed a clergyman give a speech in a 2 x 3 meter room without protocol and formality and without table and a chair and for an Iran to rally round him.²

At midnight, one could hear the sound of pen and paper

In France, as necessitated, the Imām slept no more than four hours every night. Sometimes when at 11 o'clock at night he would go to bed but at three past midnight we would hear the sound of pen and paper coming out from his room. He would not find the time during the day to read the translated newspapers because of heavy workload and so in the wee hours of the night, he would wake up to read the translated newspapers and to present his views about the news reports³.

I never saw the Imām idle even once

The follow-up ability of the Imām despite his old age was to such an extent that none of those close to him could claim to have seen the Imām idle or disengaged even once and wasting his time.

In this period when we were in the presence of the Imām, we observed that there was no such thing as taking off from working for the people and the Islamic Revolution.

For the Imām it made no difference whether it was summer or winter, Saturday or Friday, feast day and non-feast day. At all times he was busy either reading or worshipping or studying the various reports that he would receive.⁴

¹ Daily program of the Imām in Paris: 'Iṭṭilā'āt' newspaper journalist, *ibid.*, p. 28.

² He would work day in and out while in France: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 340.

³ At midnight, one could hear the sound of pen and paper: Mrs. Dabbāgh, *ibid.*, p. 340-341.

⁴ I never saw the Imām idle even once: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmiyān, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 340.

Investigate this matter

At the beginning of the Revolution when each group and party had its own newspaper, the Imām stated: “Bring me all of them” and contrary to newspaper reading norm when normally, individuals paid more attention to headings and sub-titles rather than the contents, the Imām before anything else gave importance to the way of thinking of the newspaper journalists and their political tendencies. Thus, every morning, the dailies “*Mīzān*”, *Jumhūrī-ye Islāmī*, *Āzādegān* and in the evenings, the evening dailies “*Inqilāb-e Islāmī*”, “*Iṭṭilā‘āt*” and “*Keyhān*” would be delivered to him on time. In many instances when they were delivered late, the Imām would personally come out and enquire about the late delivery of the newspapers. Although sometimes the news was disagreeable and we could not deliver them to the Imām, however, his intense persistence to read the newspapers would prevail over us. In many instances, he would send newspaper cuttings to the office and write a note asking us to “investigate the matter” and “ask the authorities for clarification” or he would want to know “why the newspaper had printed such a subject.”¹

The blessed life of the Imām

We repeatedly witnessed that while taking the evening stroll as a physical exercise which was important and critical for safeguarding his health, the Imām would hold a rosary in one hand and invoke the Names of Allah while holding a small radio set in the other hand by means of which he kept himself of all the events taking place inside and outside the country. Thus one can say that the actual age of the Imām was not eighty-seven years whereas it was twice as much in terms of function and application.²

One-minute definition

The Imām would never allow his time to be wasted. We saw on many occasions that minutes before the meal was to be served which is normally spent idly, he would use those minutes to study and recite the glorious Qur’an. Once I went in his presence for some work. When the conversation ended, he looked at his watch and said: “Can you give a one-minute definition?” before I could think about it and workout my mind, the one-minute had elapsed and the Imām switched on the radio. At that instant I

¹ Investigate this matter: Muḥammad ‘Alī Anṣārī, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 267.

² The blessed life of the Imām: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 347.

realized that he intended to use the one-minute before the news broadcast and not to spend it idly because he had a habit of listening to the news on time.¹

He never had time on his hands

At his residence, the Imām would listen to the radio or watch television or read letters or study the news reports. He would not be idle for a minute. He would take the radio with him even to the bathroom or the radio set would be perched on his shoulders while he performed ablutions. I can say with assurance that he never had time on his hands.²

He would recite the Qur'an even if it was for less than two minutes

In the gap between the noon and evening prayers when he would come for lunch, in this brief moment of a few minutes, the Imām would seize the moment to recite the glorious Qur'an which would last for less than two minutes.³

He would make good use of all the hours of the day

The Imām would make good use of all the hours of the day. For example, if the physician would prescribe that walking was good for his health, while acting on the instructions, he would make other use of his walking. For instance, he would take along a small radio set with him for the morning walk and listen to the proceedings of the parliament; or in the afternoons, he would tune in to the foreign radio stations or read the evening newspapers. He would perform at least two tasks simultaneously by acting on the instructions of the physician and also listening to the news of the situation all over the world.⁴

Making full use of time even when hospitalized

Even on the night before the surgery on the hospital bed and the serum and drugs were being injected and despite general weakness, the Imām did not

¹ One-minute definition: Masīḥ Borūjerdī, *ibid.*, p. 348.

² He never had time on his hands: Mrs. Zahrā Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*

³ He would recite the Qur'an even if it was for less than two minutes, Mrs. Dabbāgh: *ibid.*

⁴ He would make good use of all the hours of the day: Dr. Ḥasan A'rāfī, *ibid.*, pp. 348-349.

neglect to recite the Qur'an and perform prayers. He was not ready to spend a single moment of his life however short and fleeting, in idleness.¹

Shrewdness and being Knowledgeable of the Enemy

I know what you want to say

Of the sagacious judgment of the Imām not only in relation to the Shāh's regime rather, with every individual, person, group or gathering whom he would come across was that he would evaluate the other party at the first encounter. I heard this from my martyred brother Hāj Muṣṭafā who would quote the Imām as having said that, "Sometimes when a person comes to see me as soon as he opens his mouth and has not finished his sentence, I come to know what he wants to say and what designs he has and what objective he wants to achieve from his meeting with me."²

If you hear about something keep your calm

Before the arrest of the Imām, one day the rumor of the departure of the Shāh from Iran gained strength and the government bodies in Qum would strengthen this rumor. They withdrew the police constables from their guard duty, caused a blackout in parts of the city of Qum such that even people on the streets of Qum would congratulate us. On that night a large crowd gathered at the residence of the Imām. A person would quote this matter confidently that, "I have accurate information that the matter is correct." The clergy and people insisted that the Imām be brought to the shrine as a show of conquest and victory. When the Imām noted the insistence of the clergy, he began to counsel them stating: "Do not lose your composure under any circumstance; if you hear something, keep your calm." With these few words, the crowd dispersed and the plot of the enemy was negated."³

Avoiding holding private meeting with the authorities of the Shāh's regime

Before the victory of the Revolution and in the previous regime, the people of Iran would go to Qum to hear the words of the Imām and would visit him either at the Great Mosque or in the front yard of his residence. In those days

¹ Making full use of time even when hospitalized, Hujjat al-Islām Rasūlī Maḥallātī, *ibid.*, p. 349.

² I know what you want to say! Sayyid Ḥamīd Rūḥānī, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 354.

³ If you hear about something, keep your calm: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*

individuals would come to hold private meetings with the Imām but the Imām would not hold private meetings with any of the government authorities and if a person would come in his presence, he would state to those present that, “You also be present in the meeting” and in this way he would prevent any exploitation.¹

Do not edit my words

One of the characteristics of the Imām was that he would not grant a private audience to anybody because he would state: “Some of them edit my words.” Thus he would ask three clergymen and his students to be present and then meet with any authority.²

Avoiding meeting the Iraqi authorities in private

The authorities in Iraq would repeatedly ask for a private audience so that perhaps the Imām would agree to their request; however, the Imām had no plans to meet the Iraqi authorities and would try as far as possible, not to give them permission. However, when at times it became necessary and he would grant permission, the Imām would invite a few reliable and trustworthy individuals who held a special position in Najaf to participate at the meeting so that they could not engage in political maneuverings and ascribe any issue to the Imām in order to take undue advantage. Among the individuals were the late Āyatullāh Madanī and some of the prominent and trustworthy Arab theologians.³

The Munāfiqīn (hypocrites) have taken you for a ride

On the trip that I intended to be received by the Imām in Najaf, I met one of my friends who asked me to tell the Imām to endorse the *Mujāhidīn* (*Munāfiqīn*) organization as soon as possible otherwise it would be late and we would fall behind. I mentioned the subject to the Imām who stated: “The gentlemen... and Muṭahharī also persuaded me to defend them; but you do not understand that they have taken you for a ride. They don’t believe in our

¹ Avoiding holding private meeting with authorities of the Shāh’s regime: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 314-315.

² Do not edit my words: Āyatullāh Khalkhālī, *ibid.*, p. 315.

³ Avoiding meeting with Iraqi authorities in private: *Jumhūrī-ye Islāmī* daily, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 366.

Islam. Friends abroad have also persuaded me and pressurized me on this subject, but they too have been deceived.”¹

Their books are deviant

When the *Munāfiqīn* (Mujāhidīn-e Khalq Organization who committed treason against the people after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and were later famously branded as the *Munāfiqīn*—hypocrites) raised their voice in protest and one or two operations were carried out successfully, it resulted in their increased acceptance so that the clergymen who were fighting against the Shāh’s regime sang their praises. Some even went further and assisted them financially while some others even joined their ranks. At every gathering they were showered with praises endorsing their religion and piety. It reached the point where even respected theologians issued statements in their favor. When the regime wanted to execute some members of the organization, they protested their executions and wrote that they were pious individuals and guardians of religion. However, at that moment the question arose that why the Imām who was the leader of the struggle had not said a word about them. Even one of today’s prominent theologians met me in Tehran and asked me to tell the Imām that they would take over the government and he would be compelled to endorse them but by then it would be too late and that before it was too late, he should endorse them. I agreed and went and told the Imām who kept silent. The Imām neither endorsed them nor sent any financial assistance to them and nor was he willing to speak a word in their favor. When I asked the Imām for the reason for his stance he stated: “I have read their books; I noticed that there was no mention of Islam and they were deviant and so I did not endorse them.” This was in a situation when their books and literature was read by all in Qum, Tehran and Mashhad.²

He would listen to the reports of all people

Individuals from Iran and abroad would arrive and the Imām would listen to their reports. However, in keeping with his practice, he would himself do the analyses and take decisions. I remember quite accurately the incident of Ḥusayn Rūḥānī who was a member of the *Munāfiqīn* (hypocrites) organization and whom the Imām had referred to in one of his speeches. This

¹ The *Munāfiqīn* (Hypocrites) have taken you for a ride: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 326.

² Their books are deviant: Āyatullāh ‘Amīd-Zanjānī, *ibid.*, pp. 326-327.

person came to see us on the understanding that he could influence the Imām through us. We told him that this was an inaccurate understanding that he had of the Imām because he would listen directly to the other party and take decisions on his own. Nobody could influence the Imām and it was useless to engage in preliminary activities.¹

We do not indulge in whispering

Dr. Sanjābī accompanied with Hāj Manyiān and Hāj Mahdīyān came to Paris. At their first meeting with the Imām, in addition to the two of them, Mr. Salāmatiyān also accompanied Dr. Sanjābī. Also present at this meeting were the late Ishrāqī and Hāj Aḥmad. Dr. Sanjābī sat next to the Imām and after exchanging greetings, he began to speak with the Imām in a low voice that almost bordered on a whisper. In a loud tone so that we too could hear, the Imām said: “We do not indulge in whispering in the ears; you are free to speak your mind on any subject.”²

He would not permit exploitation

Journalists, whose job was to investigate and discover the truth and wanted to know the point of view of the Imām precisely, would under no circumstance agree to interview those close to the Imām. This was because they knew well that writing their views would not solve any problem because they neither reflected the intellectual and political thinking and stance of the Imām nor reveal the political and social movement of the people of Iran. Moreover, the position of the Imām could be stated by him alone and not by others. In conclusion, in order to find out about the Imām’s programs journalists would attempt either to interview the Imām or to make use of his speeches and statements delivered on certain occasions such as “*Tāsū‘ā*” (night of ‘*Āshūrā*) and “‘*Āshūrā*” (day of martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn) or his pronouncements and letters addressed to the people of Iran or written to some of the theologians. This resulted in regular request for interviews by journalists and a substantial amount of the Imām’s time was devoted to this matter. Once again it was the foresight of the Imām that prevented experienced international journalists from making a mountain of a molehill and inflicting the slightest damage on the struggle and the Islamic Revolution and effecting the least exploitation or misinterpretation in the course of the Imām’s struggle. If at some instances, an opposing viewpoint was presented,

¹ He would listen to the reports of all people.

² We do not indulge in whispering: Dr. Ibrāhīm Yazdī, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 315.

it would immediately reach the ears of the Imām so that in subsequent statements or speeches or interviews, he would refer to those opposing viewpoints. To put it in one word and state candidly, the Imām would not permit anyone to interfere.¹

Don't allow him to be there

I had just been appointed as commander of the Revolutionary Guards when the Imām asked to see me and stated: “There is one person in the Revolutionary Guards in Qum who has written a series of articles in the newspapers; and these articles are those same viewpoints of the *Munāfiqīn* (hypocrites) and their likes. Ask for him and don't allow him to be there and send him to a different location because as it is, Qum is a sensitive place.” When I followed up the matter, I realized that the incident was as stated by the Imām. At that time I was amazed at this incident that how despite all those preoccupations, he had found time to read all the articles and to note all their details.²

I have nothing to do with commotion and chanting salutations

One day a group of Friday Prayer leaders from various provincial towns and cities including the Martyr at the Altar Āyatullāh Ṣadūqī, Āyatullāh Madanī and a few others met with the Imām in connection with the dismissal of then president Banī Ṣadr from office. This group appeared to be satisfied with their meeting with the Imām and so I asked them enquiringly that what had happened that caused them to be so pleased. In reply they said that the Imām had stated to them that if the religious ultimatum had been completed, he would not hesitate and that the dismissal of Banī Ṣadr would not take more than a minute. the Imām further stated to his audience that: “You should not be under the impression that I am afraid of commotion and controversy; if all those present in this gathering in the Jamārān Ḥusayniyyah that chant the slogan in favor of Khomeinī at some pint of time chant slogan against me, it will make no difference to me. I shall never give importance to their utterances and have nothing to do with their commotion and chanting salutations; rather, I shall resort to my religious obligation. That's all.”³

¹ He would not permit exploitation: Dr. Ḥasan Ḥabībī, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 360.

² Don't allow him to be there: Dr. Muḥsin Riḍā'ī, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 369.

³ I have nothing to do with their commotion and chanting of salutations; ‘Alī Akbar Āshtiyānī, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 345.

Now is not the time for it

On several occasions I would tell the Imām that former president Banī Šadr wanted to sow discord between the military and the Revolutionary Guards Corps. He would create hell for the religious members. He tried his utmost to bring about a confrontation between the military and the Revolutionary Guards and to merge the revolutionary ‘*Komītehs*’ with the local police forces. When he was the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, he would on no account give arms to the defenders of Islam. God alone knows how much he would make us run around just to give us a few RPG-7 grenade launchers to send to the warfronts. I remember we sent one of our friends to the city of Qazvīn because I heard that RPG’s were available there. He brought just seven or nine RPG weapons which he himself took to the frontline. We were extremely pleased at having for example, succeeded in sending some weaponry to the warfront. How many times we told him that Khorramshahr was about to fall but he would not listen. I gave a report to the Imām of the things that he had done and the Imām responded: “You think I don’t understand; now is not the time for it. When the time is ripe, I will decide myself.”¹

Do not keep silent with regard to the Soviet Union

In 1986 when as the representative of the Imām and supervisor of the Iranian Ḥāj pilgrims I went to perform the Ḥāj pilgrimage, an interview was arranged at the airport in which I spoke of the political issues that must be proposed at the Ḥāj pilgrimage. In particular I referred to the ‘Disavowal of Pagans’ demonstrations that year for the unity of Muslims and the slogans we had prepared against America and Zionist aggressors and the problems of Lebanon. At that moment, I did not make any mention of slogans against the Soviet Union; rather I said that we would propose slogans against America, Israel and the infidel and atheistic powers. Then when we departed for Mecca, Ḥāj Aḥmad called me on the phone and relayed the message of the Imām that the Imām had stated that we should observe the policy of the slogan “neither East nor West” and that just as we attacked America and its policies, alongside it we should also directly attack the Soviet Union as well and not to discriminate between the two superpowers. At that moment I did not understand what had been the issue and simply replied that we would do as instructed. When the Ḥāj rituals were performed and we returned to Iran,

¹ Now is not the time for it: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, p. 344.

Ḥāj Aḥmad told me that, “Āqā Karrūbī, do you know what the core of the issue why I sent you the message was?” I replied in the negative and he said: “We too were not aware that the Imām had heard the interview you gave at the airport in which you named America and Israel but failed to mention the Soviet Union. Then the Imām stated: “In Mecca he must not put the Soviet Union in an envelope. No, he must name the Soviet Union directly and he must also refer directly to the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union.”¹

Nothing must be kept away from the nation

The personal message of American President Carter to the Imām requesting that the American hostages be freed was relayed to the Imām through former Foreign Minister Quṭb-Zādeh on Friday whereas Mr. Quṭb-Zādeh had received it from the Swiss Charge d’affaire on Wednesday. The following day or on that same day they had sent a second message to Banī Ṣadr. However, the message given to the Imām did not contain the harsh words that was contained in Banī Ṣadr’s message and was more lenient.

When the Imām read the message he stated: “This must be published because we do not hide anything from the nation and secondly, it is possible that they have published it themselves so that they think something and the people also get the wrong impression that things are being hidden from them. We must tell the people all that is taking place and the people must decide for themselves.” For this reason he sated: “Publish the message immediately so that it is broadcast on the same day over the radio network.”² ✍

¹ Do not keep silent with regard to the Soviet Union: Maḥdī Karrūbī, *ibid.*, p. 286.

² Nothing must be kept away from the nation: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 121.

Part 4: Role Model of Strength and Patience

Courage

I have not been afraid of anyone till now

I recall in one of the speeches that the Imām delivered in the Great Mosque in the first years of the struggle in the presence of a large crowd, he stated that he had never been intimidated by any threat and problem. In fact whenever for any reason there was possibility of a problem or alarm, one saw no sign of fear in the Imām. At that same speech—of course I do not recall correctly whether he took an oath or not—when he was sixty-three years of age he stated: “Till now I have never been intimidated by any person or thing and have never been overcome with fear.”¹

I do not recall being afraid of any person

A very successful scientist narrated to me that he was seated with a group of religious scholars in the presence of the Imām. The discussion revolved round the big powers of the world that he stated: “I do not recall being afraid of anything or any person till now except the Almighty God.”²

Inimitable Orientation

After issuance of the pronouncement that “befriending the Shāh means plunder” a large number of clergymen and theologians were taken for military conscription from Qum and taken to Bāgh-e Shāh barracks in Tehran. They were disrobed and were asked to wear military uniforms. In

¹ I have not been afraid of anyone till now: Extracted from Biography of Imām Khomeinī, vol. 2, p. 234.

² I don't recall being afraid of any person: ‘Allāmah Ja‘farī, *ibid.*, p. 235.

those same days, I was in the presence of the Imām. A ‘Sayyid’ seminary student with a very disoriented appearance banged open the door of the residence of the Imām and entered the house and the room in which the Imām and we were seated causing all of those present to laugh as well as to feel saddened. The Imām was busy writing that the ‘Sayyid’ said in a loud voice that, “O Imām, we were coming out of the class of Mr. Meshkīnī at the Imām Mosque that the police broke in and took away the seminary students, boarded them on a truck to take them for military conscription. They also took away Mr. Rafsanjānī.” On hearing this news and the disoriented appearance of the ‘Sayyid’, we were all overcome with sadness and regret while some even broke down and cried. In the same position in which he was seated and busy writing with pen in hand, he looked from above his spectacles at the ‘sayyed’ and stated: “Now why don’t you sit down?” When the ‘Sayyid’ sat down, the Imām removed the spectacles from his eyes and with his normal composure rested against the wall and stated: “Were they taken away for military service?” To which the man replied affirmatively. The Imām then stated: “They must undergo military duty; we need them in the future!” This matter coming at that time from the Imām was truly at an inimitable and incredible level.¹

While they beat up my children!

At dusk of the same day on which the Fayḍiyyah Seminary incident took place, we were at the residence of the Imām that news of the beating up of seminary students reached our ears and that they intended to come to the Imām’s residence. The late Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Lavāsānī who was a very close friend of the Imām, stood up and closed the door of the house. As soon as the Imām to know of this, he immediately rose and opened the door of the house stating that: “Should I close the doors of my house on myself while they beat up my children?”

Thereafter, he stood up to recite prayers and like other nights, he recited the optional night prayer when perhaps at any moment they may have attacked the residence of the Imām.²

¹ Inimitable orientation: ‘Alī Davani: *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

² While they beat up my children! Āyatullāh Tawassulī: *Ibid.*, p. 236.

Soul at peace with God

Before the Fayḍiyyah incident and near the annual Feast, one early morning, when I was on my way, I saw declarations that were pasted on two walls. In those declarations that were from the ‘Savak’ secret police and were pasted on the walls under different names such as ‘national front’, Society of Women etc... insulting remarks were made about the Imām using very foul language. On seeing these declarations, I became extremely disturbed. Anyway, I went to the residence of the Imām and noticed that some individuals had also brought along with them some of those declarations. While I was extremely disturbed, I told Mr. Ṣāni‘ī that: “I want to see the Imām.” Mr. Ṣāni‘ī told the Imām that I had come to see him and a few minutes later the Imām asked me to go inside. When I was in the presence of the Imām, I saw that he was studying in preparation for classes. This was a little amazing for me that in this situation and circumstances, when things were becoming complicated and despite these declarations that had profoundly affected everybody, how the Imām was in such control of himself and was busy reading and that too a text that was not part of the syllabus. The book that he was reading was a book that was for instance, authored by a theologian about a discussion and the Imām was reading it in order to debate and reject the discussion. I was astounded at this amazing morale of the Imām that at a time when we did not have the nerve even to take a look at a book, he was busy reading in absolute peace.¹

We too will order our commandos

In the year 1963, on the morning of ‘*Āshūrā*’ day, while the Imām was at home among the people and was listening to religious invocations, one of the secret service ‘Savak’ authorities got to him and after introducing himself, mentioned: “I am commissioned on behalf of His Royal Highness to communicate to you that if you want to give a speech at the Fayḍiyyah Theological School, I will break into the seminary with my commandos and spill blood.”

Without showing the slightest reaction and without a twitch of an eyebrow, he responded: “We too will order our commandos to teach a lesson to the Shāh’s agents.”²

¹ Soul at peace with God: Āyatullāh Ṭāhirī Khorram-Ābādī: *Ibid.*, p. 237.

² We too will order our commandos: Sayyid Ḥamīd Rūhānī: *Ibid.*, p. 293.

Unlock the door of the house immediately

When the Shāh's agents attacked the Fayḍiyyah Seminary, right at that moment I was at the Imām's residence that the Imām was informed that the Shāh's agents had attacked the Fayḍiyyah Seminary, hurling down a number of students from the terrace, beating up old men and smashing the chambers, burning copies of the Qur'an and attacking the ordinary people much like the savage Mogul invaders had done. It was almost at sunset that the news would pour of an imminent attack on the Imām's residence.

One of the theologians (late Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Lavāsānī) ordered that the door of the residence be closed. At that instant, the Imām noticed that the door of the house was locked. Suddenly, he got up and stated: "They are beating up the seminary students and my children at the theological school and have ruined the school so why must the door of my house be locked?" Next he ordered that the doors of the residence be opened immediately and he went towards the door stating: "Let whoever wants to come inside dare to do so and come in."¹

The Imām unlocked the door to the house

The courage of the Imām needs no introduction because it crossed all limits and boundaries. In that same infamous Fayḍiyyah tragedy in which the Shāh sent around a thousand men in plain clothes into the theological school and committed that horrendous crime, when this number of agents thought they had triumphed in the Fayḍiyyah Seminary incident, they marched on to the streets of Qum and created an astounding fear in the city with their chants of "Long live the Shāh!" so that nobody dared to breathe. Because their location was the "Ḥakīm Nizāmī High School" that was close to the Imām's residence, it occurred to some that they were moving towards the residence. Thus they told the Imām that this armed group was moving towards his residence as they chanted slogans. Some thought it expedient to get up and lock the door of the house and perhaps even lock it from behind thus barring their entry. Thus they locked the house thinking that he would be please with their action. When the Imām came to know of their action, without saying a word to anyone, came down from his room and went and unlocked the door from both sides and returned and sat inside the same room that was located nearest to the door. The sound of the commandos increased at every moment but the Imām remained unperturbed and without any sign of fear that the one

¹ Unlock the door of my house immediately! Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

thousand commandos could break in at any moment and wreak havoc on them.¹

I warn you and your government

A telegraphic message was communicated to the Shāh addressing him to urge the government to shun religious deviations. In reply to the telegram of the theologians, the Shāh wrote that he wished the theologians success in their endeavors to enlighten the common people. In response the Imām wrote a letter to the Shāh in which he stated that, “Since you desire the success of the prominent theologians in educating and enlightening the people, thus I would like to warn you and your government” which meant that in fact they were the common people and needed to be warned and guided!²

I too am a soldier of Islam

After the Imām was freed from prison of the Shāh’s regime, the ‘*Ittilā‘āt*’ daily wrote an editorial claiming that the clergy had come to an understanding with the government. The Imām gave a resounding and strident speech denying the claim. The Shāh’s regime sent Colonel Mowlavi, the head of ‘Savak’ secret police of Tehran to deliver an apology to the Imām. He wanted that the meeting to be personal but considering that it was not the style of the Imām to meet any of the political personalities whether government or others in private, he ordered that some individuals be present in the room where the meeting was to take place. A few individuals including myself were present at the meeting. Mawlawī started to speak and to apologize for the mistake and while tendering apology, he uttered a sentence that seemed insulting. He said: “O’ Imām, do not give us a chance to put in to action our military duties.” Suddenly, the Imām responded angrily and while pointing his own index finger at his chest stated: “I too am a soldier of Islam. Do not give us a chance to put into practice our military duties.”³

Don’t do something that will cause me to order them to throw you out

In 1963 and on the day of ‘*‘Āshūrā*’, the Imām was to deliver a speech. Meanwhile, the commandos of the Shāh’s army had been deployed inside the Fayḍiyyah Theological School. There was great commotion in the city and the rumor had spread that a great danger threatened the Imām and that it was

¹ The Imām unlocked the door to the house: Āyatullāh Fāḍil Lankarānī, *ibid.*, p. 294.

² I would like to warn you and your government: Āyatullāh Mu’min, *ibid.*, p. 299.

³ I too am a soldier of Islam: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*, pp. 298-299.

better that he stay away from the Fayḍiyyah seminary on that day. However, he did not accept and was even not willing to sit in a roofed automobile. For this reason, he arrived at the Fayḍiyyah seminary in an open jeep and in the midst of the people and while addressing the Shāh with the same blatant accent stated: “You puny guy, don’t do something that will cause me to order them to throw you out of this country.”¹

Fiercest attack on America

On the subject of ‘Capitulation’, one of the authorities had arrived in Qom to meet the Imām. The Imām did not give him an appointment and thus he went to his son, Ḥāj Muṣṭafā and had told him that if the Imām wanted to speak on the subject of ‘Capitulation’ he must take care not to say a word against America and that to speak against America in those days was far more dangerous than speaking against the Shāh. However, in that speech the Imām stated as follows: “The President of America should know that today, he is the most hated of individuals of mankind in the midst of our people. Today all our miseries is due to America”; and went on to level the fiercest attack on America.”²

They would be overcome with fear while I would offer them sympathy

About the night when they arrested the Imām in Qum and took him away to Tehran, the late Ḥāj Muṣṭafā would quote the Imām as having stated that: “When they were taking me away, midway between Qum and Tehran the car swung off the main road. I thought that they wanted to put an end to the issue; but when I connected to my heart, I saw there it had not changed at all.” Thus when in 1964 when he delivered a speech at the Greta Mosque following his release from prison, he stated: “By Allah, I have never been afraid in all my life. On that night when they were taking me away, they were overcome with fear whereas I would offer them my sympathies.”³

No, I wasn’t afraid at all

After 15th Khordād (June 5, 1963) when the Imām was released from prison and resided in the Qeyṭariyyeh district of Tehran, Āyatullāh Mar’ashī came

¹ Don’t do something that will cause me to order them to throw you out: Ḥasan Rūḥānī, *ibid.*, p. 291.

² Fiercest attack on America: Sayyid Ḥamīd Rūḥānī, *ibid.*, p. 291.

³ They were overcome with fear while I would offer them my sympathy: ‘Abdu’l-‘Alī Qarahī, *ibid.*, p. 241.

to pay him a visit and asked: “Were you not afraid when they were taking you away?” the Imām responded: “No, not at all. Even on I assumed that they were pointing towards the Howḍ-e Sulṭān Lake (Salt Lake). At that time there were rumors that those who opposed the Shāh or the regime or if there were opponents in the army, they would be taken there and thrown in the Salt Lake. Thus I had a feeling that they were pointing to that location. By God, at that time also, I was not afraid at all.”¹

Why are you doing this?

About the night when the Imām was arrested and exiled to Turkey, the servant of the Imām Mashadi Ḥusayn who would serve tea had said that the Imām had told the Shāh’s agents that, “what’s all this, why are you creating a mess? Don’t you feel ashamed; one of you could have come, knocked at the door and asked Khomeinī to come out and well, I would have come out!” later the Imām himself had told me that: “On the to Tehran when we reached the oil well, I told them that all our sufferings was because of this crude oil and why they were doing this to me. I spoke with them until we reached Tehran. One of them who was sitting next to me wept all the way to Tehran.”²

The same feeling that I now have

Ḥāj Aḥmad Āqā was narrating in Najaf that he asked the Imām how he had felt when he boarded the plane and flew off to Turkey to which the Imām had stated: “By Allah, I had the same feeling that I have now sitting by your side.”³

You cannot take photographs

Once, an official fourteen-member delegation consisting of Iraqi authorities paid a visit to the Imām. Because a four-member delegation had arrived previously and returned displeased, the Imām stated that the person who was the interpreter to come for interpretation. When we asked him to come, he was overcome with fear. At first he did not come; next he made some excuse and later spoke ill about the person who was supposed to meet the Imām then and that he was a mean provincial governor and so forth and asked me to tell

¹ No, I wasn’t afraid at all, Dr. Maḥmūd Borūjerdī, *ibid.*

² Why are you doing this? Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, p. 296.

³ The same feeling that I have now, Ḥujjat al-Islām Qarahī, *ibid.*

the Imām to beware of him. I told him that he was talking nonsense because way back in 1963, the Imām had in his own residence addressed the president of America and told him that he was the most hated individual on earth and so how could he be afraid of these people! I added that if I conveyed this to the Imām he would throw me out! That interpreter also left the place laughing. When the Ba'athist Iraqi delegation entered the residence of the Imām, I was standing in the front yard and they probably either did not see me or were certain that I did not speak Arabic otherwise they would not have said what they did. The provincial governor was despondent and asked the agent accompanying him what he must do when he went in? To which the agent replied that he should kiss the Imām's hand. Then they entered and were seated. They had brought with them recording and photographic equipment. While they fixed the tripod for the film camera, the Imām spoke not a word. After they had finished their job the Imām asked them to gather their equipments which they did but kept behind a film camera. They spoke a single sentence which meant that they wanted to take just one photograph but the Imām declined stating: "It cannot be done." Then they collected all their equipment and departed after their meeting was over. The Imām was so much in control of the situation that he was not willing to give them any leeway."¹

You cannot call that a government

The speech of the Imām and his stance vis-à-vis the Ba'athist Iraq regime was a cry in the wilderness. It was for the first time and perhaps the last time that a spiritual-political personality had in the sphere of dictatorship Ba'ath regime of Iraq broke the atmosphere of repression and cried out against them stating: "This government cannot be called a government at all; it does not have the strength of resistance vis-à-vis the nations..."²

You are worse than the Jews

When the first program of exile of Iranians residents of Iraq began, the Baathists would imprison and torture a large number of fellow-citizens everyday. They would confiscate their wealth and properties and throw them out in the most shameful manner until the Ba'ath government of Iraq announced that all Iranians must leave Iraq within six days. It was winter and people were busy preparing to leave. The Imām also decided to leave Iraq

¹ You cannot take photographs: Hujjat al-Islām Qarahī, *ibid.*, p. 307.

² You cannot call that a government: Sayyid Ahmad Rūhānī, *ibid.*, p. 306.

but the Ba'athist Iraqi government because of its policies did not want him to leave Iraq. Thus they informed that in this connection some persons including one named 'Alī Riḍā who was Ṣaddām's deputy had arrived in Najaf from Baghdad in order to meet with the Imām and negotiate on this issue. The Imām declared that he would not allow them to come into his house and that none of them had the right to meet with him and that he too had sent his passport to be stamped so that he could leave with his compatriots. Because 'Alī Riḍā was a dangerous and tyrannical person, the people were horrified by this decision of the Imām. Thus the theologians and people requested the late Shaykh Naṣrullāh Khalkhālī that because 'Alī Riḍā was extremely dangerous and it was impossible not to allow him inside, he should ask the Imām to receive them. He conveyed the people's concerns to the Imām. In reply the Imām stated: "I have planned to meet him but I must shatter his pomp and power. He should not be under the impression that since he is arriving here from Baghdad, he can meet with us easily. Let his pomp be shattered and then I will let him in."

Then when this group were received by the Imām, he stated to them with absolute candor that: "You are worse than the Jews; even the Jews have not done what you have done because when they threw the Jews out of Iraq they gave them six months time and after the expiry of the six months also they gave them time to complete their tasks whereas you did not give the Iranians more than six days to leave."¹

The government of Iran is wrong and you are wrong too

When the Imām was residing in Najaf, the dispute between Iran and Iraq concerning the border strip and the Arvand River occurred. The Ba'athist regime wanted to take a written statement from the prominent theologians of the Najaf Seminary against the despotic regime of Iran. They were under the impression that because the Imām was exiled and was disgusted at the Shāh's regime, he would definitely issue a thorough pronouncement in favor of the Ba'ath Party in order to take his revenge on the Shāh. However, the Imām categorically declared at a meeting with the provincial governor of Karbalā, the head of the secret police, the head of the police services and the governor-general that, "The government of Iran is wrong and you are wrong too. This matter does not concern the Shi'ite Sources of Emulation and the Theological School that they should come and give a statement in your favor.

¹ You are worse than the Jews: Āyatullāh Khātam Yazdī, *ibid.*, pp. 301-302.

Go and solve it yourself.” After the angry response of the Imām, the Ba‘athist agents were infuriated and one of them said: “Tomorrow we shall expel him from Najaf.” When the Imām heard these words, he stated: “They think that I am very happy here in a place where Islam is literally being repressed; where the honor of Islam is disregarded and where the sanctity of Islam is not observed; what kind of a place is this to live in? Here is my passport; send me wherever you want to; wherever I go will be better than here. I am comfortable only in a place where the Muslims live in welfare. What has this place got to offer to make me feel comfortable.” This was at a time when some of the senior religious authorities were anxious and worried at the Imām’s attitude with the Ba‘athist regime lest the government in power attack the Holy city of Najaf with armor and well-equipped soldiers and annihilate and destroy them.¹

Is the door of the theological school open or not?

In those days when the Revolution was on the threshold of victory and we were at the side of the Imām, the qualities and spiritual outlook of the Imām astounded all of us especially his high morale on that day which I shall never forget. It was at the moment when martial law was declared at around 4.30 in the afternoon of February 10 and we were in the presence of the Imām. All of us were suffering from a peculiar anxiety. But the Imām was so composed and in control as if nothing had ever occurred and while he was busy writing the pronouncements for smashing the martial law, he asked: “Is the door of the theological school open or not?” No sooner did we say that the door of the theological school was locked out of security concerns because of existing dangers that he immediately stated: “Go and open the door so that people can move about.”

The following night it was February 11 and there was possibility of bombardments and military takeover but however much we requested the Imām to leave the theological school and stay somewhere else for the time being, he refused and in response to our pleadings stated confidently: “Whoever is afraid can go; I will be here.”²

¹ The government of Iran was wrong and you are also wrong: Āyatullāh Karīmī, *ibid.*, pp. 301-302.

² Is the door of the Theological School open or not? Hujjat al-Islām Nāṭiq Nūrī, *ibid.*, p. 260.

I will not shift from this room

One day I was at the Refāh School that we received information that on that night they wanted to break into the Refāh School and attack the residence of the Imām. We located a house behind the ‘Alawī School where we planned to take the Imām via the back door of that school to pass the night. Mr. Hāshimī and the rest of the friends went and spoke with the Imām. He responded: “Any person who wishes can leave; I will not shift from this room.” Mr. Hāshimī said that he again went to see the Imām and told him that it was essential that he live. He again replied: “Any person who is afraid may leave; I will stay in my room alone.” Everybody was horrified but the Imām showed not a single iota of fear and terror and just like on all other nights, he went to bed on time and woke up before dawn.¹

America cannot do any damn thing

In the incident of the occupation of the U.S. Espionage Den most of the authorities were opposed and everyday they would put forward a new subject. One would say that it was not sensible to fight America while another would claim that America had deployed its armed forces in the region and yet another would claim that American navy had been sent. However, the Imām famously stated that: “America cannot do any damn thing.” Thus when one of the revolutionary personalities complained to the Imām about the conspiracies and plots, the Imām calmly placed his hand on his chest and stated: “Why are you afraid? Nothing will happen!”²

I don’t know what it is to fear

I heard from members of the Imām’s household that he had said in his private meetings that, “I have never known a phenomenon such as fear and don’t know what it is to fear meaning that what happens to a person when he is overcome with fear.” From the medical viewpoint, we got this impression from the Imām that fear was basically alien to the Imām because when a person is overcome with fear a substance known as adrenalin is secreted and this substance is responsible for the external signs at the time of fear meaning that it causes heartbeat to increase; the color of the skin to pale; the body to tremble and get agitated; to raise blood pressure and create an undesirable condition in the person. We who for the past eight or nine years were

¹ I will not shift from this room: Āyatullāh Martyr Maḥallātī, *ibid.*, p. 261.

² America cannot do any damn thing! Ḥujjat al-Islām Anṣārī, *ibid.*, p. 303.

monitoring the pulse rate of the Imām, checking his blood pressure and even of late monitoring his heart by means of the television screen or telemonitor while we could check his heartbeat minute-by-minute and see the heartbeat of the Imām with our own eyes throughout his period when a lot of unsavory incidents had occurred that must normally at least raise the heartbeat, yet we never saw the heartbeat rate of the Imām increase in relation to the flood of incidents and difficulties.¹

There was no distress whatsoever in the person of the Imām

There was never any difference between the last night of the life of the Imām and other nights and basically the Imām—before the physicians could diagnose—knew that his honorable life had come to an end and that there was no return from this path. Despite this, there was absolutely no fear, distress and horror in his honorable personality.²

Peace of Mind

Ḥāj Muṣṭafā’s arrest, deep concern of others, peacefulness of the Imām

On June 11, 1969, the head of the secret police of Ṣaddām and the governor-general of Najaf paid a visit to the Imām and mentioned that they had been commissioned by the Command Council of revolution to send Ḥāj Muṣṭafā to Baghdad (for the crime of paying a visit and offering sympathy on behalf of the Imām to the late Āyatullāh Ḥakīm after his return from Baghdad) and they sought his permission for taking him to Baghdad. The Imām replied: “If taking Muṣṭafā to Baghdad is dependent on my permission, I will never grant such permission; but if you have a mission to arrest him then I leave it up to you.” When at eight o’clock in the morning Ḥāj Muṣṭafā along with some security officials of Iraq was taken to Baghdad, in keeping with his daily program, the Imām held his teaching classes and in the midst of sorrow, apprehension and distress of those present at his teaching session, he resorted to teaching the complex theological subjects with a world of peacefulness and assurance while pursuing his routine of leading prayers, holding meeting as well as his other daily programs in a normal manner!³

¹ I don’t know what it is to fear: Dr. Pūr-Muqaddas, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 277.

² There was no distress whatsoever in the person of the Imām: Dr. Pūr-Muqaddas, *ibid.*, p. 284.

³ Ḥāj Muṣṭafā’s arrest, deep concern of others, peacefulness of the Imām: Sayyid Ḥamīd Rūḥānī, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 243.

Absolute calm at the time of utmost suffering

In the year 1968, I succeeded in meeting the Imām once in Najaf. In those years, going to the residence of the Imām in Najaf from under the watchful eyes of the hellish secret police ‘Savak’ of the evil ‘Ṭāghūt’ regime would not remain concealed and go unnoticed. For this reason, very few people would go to his house on a regular basis. At that time, the Imām lived in that extremely humble house in Najaf with a few of his friends and his revered household. On the day when I went to the Imām’s residence, about three or four people had come to pay him a visit even though it was the annual Iranian New Year holidays and a relatively large number of Iranians would travel to Iraq. In the year 1969 meaning precisely the years that the evil “Ṭāghūt” regime was either holding the 2500-year celebrations of the monarchy as a sign of consolidation of the evil “ṭāghūt” regime in the land of Iran or was making preparations for it, what do you think the face of the Imām revealed? Did it show defeat, weakness or anxiety? It showed none of them. The Imām would speak and approach issues with such a confident and composed face that he would make the visitor and the audiences feel more hopeful of the future.¹

One could not hear the effects of excitability in the tone of the Imām’s voice

Āyatullāh Khomeinī accepted to meet with the special correspondent of the ‘Le Monde’ daily at his place of exile in Najaf (Iraq). With a thin face and a calm voice, Āyatullāh Khomeinī spoke with us for about two hours. Even when he was mentioning and repeating the subject that Iran must release itself from the evil of the Shāh and also when he would refer to the martyrdom of his son, there was neither any sign of excitement in his voice nor any noticeable movement in the lines on his face. His attitude, his power of control and his strength of character was prudent. Instead of stressing on words, faith and convictions to communicate with his audience, the Āyatullāh would do so by his gaze—a gaze that was always penetrating. However, when the subject would become sensitive and reach to a major objective, it would become sharp and intolerable. The Āyatullāh has a firm and absolute resolve and has no intention of accepting any sort of

¹ Absolute calm at the time of utmost suffering: as quoted by martyr Beheshū, *ibid.*, p. 251.

compromise. He is determined to continue his struggle against the Shāh to its final conclusion...¹

Imām was the only person who was calm

Because of security reasons, the migration of the Imām from Iraq in the year 1978 must remain a secret and thus we went through hard days there. On the final night when an exclusive group of companions of the Imām needed to travel with him, I was extremely nervous and could not sleep. I got up and sat on the bed. I saw that the Imām, who in those hours would normally wake up to recite the optional midnight prayers, was also sitting on his bed. When he saw that I was awake, he calmly told me to go to sleep. At dawn when the Imām intended to begin his journey, all the members of household had a peculiar condition and no one could be heard to breathe as if no one was inside the house. The only person who was extremely calm was the Imām. He said goodbye to us and departed with my brother.²

Assurance, composure and power in the Imām's gaze

When the Imām arrived at Paris airport it was not that he came by previous appointment and became known that definitely there would be no problem encountered on his arrival in Paris. Just imagine a leader as old as him and who at this critical juncture of the struggle had departed for Kuwait but was not accepted. There was talk of his going to Syria, but it had not happened. Now he had come to France. One of the Iranian photographers was saying that because of his unique technique of photography and journalism, he had gone and stood at a sensitive point of the airport in Paris—at a location where the passengers would pass from in front of a table. He wanted to see the face and gaze of the Imām and thus he went and clicked a photograph which he had kept with him from a very interesting angle. As he was looking into the camera, he focused the camera exactly on the eyes of the Imām so that the camera photographed the full gaze of the Imām. In that gaze, one could see nothing else except assurance, composure and power.³

¹ One could not hear the effects of excitability in the tone of the Imām's voice: 'Le Monde' journalist, *ibid.*

² Imām was the only person who was calm: Farīdeh Muṣṭafawī, *ibid.*, p. 253.

³ Assurance, composure and power in the gaze of the Imām: Martyr Beheshtī, *ibid.*, p. 255.

All except the Imām, were worried

Two of my colleagues wrote in a news report for the June Afrique that, “In the aircraft that carried the Imām to Tehran, all were worried whether it would be allowed to land at Tehran airport or it would be attacked by the fighter aircrafts of the Shāh’s regime. No one could sleep because of worry except for one person who was none other than Imām Khomeinī who went to the upper storey of the aircraft, lied down on the floor and slept soundly.¹

He recited his optional midnight prayer very slowly

The Imām was really very calm in the aircraft on his way to Tehran from France and had no turbulence whatsoever. Even the night before the flight, he recited the optional midnight prayer and the dawn prayer very slowly and in keeping with his usual nightly routine. He also rested for a while before boarding the aircraft.²

The Imām was perfectly normal

In the aircraft that carried the Imām from Paris to Iran, I was seated beside him. When the aircraft approached Tehran a journalist came and asked the Imām about his feelings at that instant to which he replied: “None at all.” The journalist was under the impression that at that moment the Imām like other individuals who were very excited and shed tears of joy while some others were overcome with fear and were in doubt whether the aircraft would be attacked or it would land safely; or whether all of them would be arrested etc...? In contrast with these thoughts, the Imām was perfectly normal because he had prepared himself in advance for any kind of event including martyrdom.³

The composure of the Imām radiated peace to all

On the day of the Imām’s arrival, we who were holding a sit-in demonstration at the university went to the airport to see the Imām. All were happy in the car and were overjoyed. Out of concern for the dangers that could possibly confront the Imām, I was shedding tears uncontrollably and did not know what might happen to him because there were threats too. Then we went and entered the airport terminal and the Imām arrived. As soon as

¹ All except the Imām were worried: Qā’idī, French Journalist, *ibid.*, p. 256.

² He recited his optional midnight prayer very slowly: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, p. 257.

³ The Imām was perfectly normal: Āyatullāh Mūsawī Khoeynīhā, *ibid.*

the cool and composed figure of the Imām appeared, all our worries and anxieties were totally forgotten. The Imām had with his composure had radiated peace and calm to me and perhaps too many other who were apprehensive. When after prolonged years, I visited the Imām there, I felt as if the exhaustion of all those years had vanished from my body.¹

News reached of the imminent bombardment of location

On the night of February 11, there were reports about bombing the location where the Imām stayed such that special precautions were taken by the Revolutionary Guards and armed forces. We were forced to stay awake until daybreak but the Imām with a world of assurance went to bed at the stroke of twelve midnight just like on any other. Once when I got close to his bedroom, I noticed that like on any other night, the Imām was asleep in absolute peace.²

A peace that exuded peace

On the night when the *Nojeh* Coup d'etat occurred, Mr. Khāmene'ī and Mr. Hāshimī went to meet with the Imām and suggested to him that it was better that he shifted to another location. The Imām stated: "I will not take a single step out from here." He was counseled that his life was in danger but he replied "No, I am not in danger, you may leave and defend yourselves as well as the radio and television broadcasting station. Ask them to place equipment here so that it is ready in case I want to relay a message." According to reports received, an attack on the Imām's residence was imminent on that same night. Thus Mr. Khāmene'ī again reiterated saying that it was possible that he might not be alive until tomorrow to relay a message. With a suggestive smile the Imām stated: "Rest assured that nothing will happen to me and you be concerned about your own safety and I will not go anywhere from here." On that not only did he not step out of his residence, rather, he amazingly boosted the morale of all and the two gentlemen took leave of the Imām with a peace of mind.³

¹ Composure of the Imām radiated peace to all: Āyatullāh Khāmene'ī, *ibid.*, pp. 258-259.

² News reached of the imminent bombardment of location: Āyatullāh Ishrāqī, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 263.

³ A peace that exuded peace: Hujjat al-Islām Imāmī-Jamārānī, *ibid.*, p. 265.

The Imām projected peace to all

After the tragedy of the 7th Tīr (June 28) incident, all the authorities were apprehensive about the outcome of the Revolution because a group of the topmost ranking officials of the state were martyred on a single night and included the highest ranking judiciary official, the late martyr Āyatullāh Dr. Beheshtī and the rest of the high-ranking officials of the country. The next morning, the late martyrs Rajā'ī and Bāhonar along with a group of ministers came to meet with the Imām but all of them were despondent. When they returned after their meeting with the Imām, Mr. Rajā'ī said: “The Imām comforted all of us with a few words.” He stated: “There are many incidents that occur in the world; and with martyrdom of a group of great men, the objective must not be neglected.” After their meeting with the Imām, they regained their composure and peace of mind and thus returned to their respective offices right from there.¹

Peace and spiritual strength of the Imām in the 7th of Tīr (June 28) bombing incident

One day after the 7th of Tīr (June 28) bombing incident I together with Martyr Rajā'ī, Mr. Mūsawī Ardabīlī and Mr. Hāshimī Rafsanjānī paid a courtesy call on the Imām. On the way the conversation revolved around how this horrendous incident be explained to the Imām so that it did not cause any problems for the Imām who had suffered a heart attack earlier. It was decided that Mr. Hāshimī should speak with the Imām on behalf of all of us. When we went into the presence of the Imām, we sat down for a while and the meeting observed a meaningful silence. The Imām also understood it; but instead of Mr. Hāshimī doing the speaking, the Imām himself spoke and then mentioned an incident to us stating that many years ago, cholera had spread in a region and many people had lost their lives to this deadly disease such that a large number of corpses were arranged at the side of one another such that people would be horrified when they saw these corpses to the extent that out of fear of getting infected people were dying. This continued until a powerful clergyman addressed the people and asked the people why they were as terrorized as people were dying together because their end had come and that they should not be afraid otherwise all of them would die out of fear of this cholera!

¹ The Imām projected peace to all: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*, p. 270.

After narrating this story the Imām stated: “Yes, in last night’s incident also people had died en masse when their end had come and these martyrs had died together so that there was nothing to get terrorized at. The Imām possessed such a spiritual strength that all those who were received by him approached the incident with unsurpassed courage.

Next he stated: “Mr. Ardabīlī should continue with the task delegated to late martyr Beheshfī and I will also issue the letter of authority to him.” He stated to Mr. Hāshimī that the parliament must be kept running in whatever form that it existed then such that on the next day, the members of parliament who were severely wounded were brought to the parliament on hospital beds and serum drips so that the legislative assembly could function with the required minimum of members.¹

The composure of the Imām during the missile strikes

During the bombardment and missile strike on Tehran that would cause every person to be overcome with distress, right at those moments we would see on the television monitor that heartbeat of the Imām had not risen. We would then check his blood pressure and see no difference as compared to normal times and this showed that the Imām was really not afraid of anything.²

Normal heartbeat of the Imām during the war on the cities

One day at around ten minutes past eight o’clock in the morning the force of an explosion resulting from a missile strike closest to Jamārān shook the entire place such that the door of the Imām’s room flung open and banged hard on my back as I was sitting next to the door. In that circumstance my attention was diverted to the Imām but I saw no change or reaction in his facial appearance. Later on also when the heart of the Imām was being constantly monitored by means of specialized equipment, I sought the opinion of one of the physicians attending on him and it became clear that there wasn’t the slightest change even in the beating of his blessed heart as reflected on the aforementioned equipment.³

¹ Peace and spiritual strength of the Imām in the 7th Tīr (June 28) bombing incident: Sayyid ‘Alī Akbar Parvaresh, *ibid.*, pp. 271-272.

² Composure of the Imām during missile strikes: Dr. Pūr-Muqaddas, *ibid.*, p. 275.

³ Normal heartbeat of the Imām during the war on the cities: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān, *ibid.*

The composure of the Imām infected all

An important point which was more effective than the guidance of the Imām in my meetings with him was his state of composure and confidence in approach to problems which would infect those who were in touch with him.¹

Composure, actions and inactions

This is how we would always view the Imām as being composed, dignified, decisive. He would gaze and speak calmly. He would walk, sit down and arise calmly. While, taking a walk he would never look around him. Even if there was a noise and commotion, he would not be shaken and would not move his head in the direction of the noise. In other words, he was in absolute control of himself.²

Fear didn't exist in the Imām

It was the night of a religious celebration. The heads of the three armed forces had organized a meeting in the house of Hāj Sayyid Aḥmad. The Imām was also present. At that very instant the air attack by Iraq began. With an air of reassurance, the Imām smiled and stated: "These people are such fools that they don't know that in such a situation and on such a night, indulging in aerial attack will cause the people to become hostile towards them." The things that never existed in the person and lexicon of the Imām were fear, nervousness, being taken aback and the likes of these traits.³

Spiritual calm in the aerial bombardment of Tehran

At the end of the month of May in the year 1965 that coincided with the blessed month of Ramaḍān, Iraqi warplanes would conduct aerial strikes against Tehran at any time of the day and night. The anti-aircraft guns with their deafening and ear-splitting sounds especially reverberating from the mountainous area of North Tehran caused people to lose their sleep and rest. At daybreak, because of sleepless nights all residents were sleepy and lethargic and there was a general breakup of discipline. Although the Imām was not required to take orders from any person and could perform his tasks at will and in keeping with his condition, nevertheless, in a situation in which all desired to sleep during the early hours of the day when it was quiet, the

¹ The composure of the Imām infected all: Mīr Ḥusayn Mūsawī, *ibid.*, pp. 275-276.

² Composure, actions and inactions: 'Alī Davānī, *ibid.*, p. 277.

³ Fear didn't exist in the Imām: Mīr Ḥusayn Mūsawī, *ibid.*, pp. 277-278.

Imām in keeping with his daily routine and program would at eight o'clock in the morning arrive at his office vigorous and refreshed to receive guests. One day Dr. 'Ārif who was constantly monitoring the condition and health of the Imām asked him after a check up whether in those days his sleep and rest had suffered or not to which he replied in the negative. The physician again asked whether there was any difference in his sleep and rest, to which the Imām again emphasized: "No."¹

Under no circumstance will I change location

In early March 1988, one day it was almost 11.30 in the morning that Mr. Anṣārī came inside the room and told me that we should go to visit the Imām. I did not ask him the reason for the visit and together we went to see the Imām. The Imām held a rosary in his hand and while he was murmuring invocations he was also walking in his room. When he saw us, he was surprised and was curious to know for what purpose we had come to visit him so hurriedly. Of course, Mr. Anṣārī was really attached to the Imām and would speak with him freely but on that day I saw that although he speaks well and is so attached to the Imām, he lowered his head and with despair and hopelessness spoke some words that implied that the situation in the city was such that most people had either left the city or if they stayed behind it was because they had made bomb shelters in their homes. He added that the various individuals that were in this noble household including himself and me, had rallied round him and were horrified at the prospect of aerial bombardment of his residence and thus for their sake he urged him to agree to relocate to a more secure place. He stated further that he had received information that they intended to launch missile strikes on Jamārān from various bases—as evident from the information received—and he pleaded with the Imām to agree to relocate to a safe location.

With perfect composure, the Imām pointed to the house of Ḥāj Aḥmad and said: "This Aḥmad should also leave together with his wife and children." Then he added with irritation that: "I will not relocate under any circumstance from this place." What the Imām implied by stating that "This Aḥmad should also leave with his wife and children" was that we who were saying that the doctor and other men were fluttering like butterflies around the Imām could leave together with him but he would not relocate.

¹ Spiritual calm during the aerial bombardment of Tehran: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmiyān, *ibid.*, p. 278.

Mr. Anṣārī who did not achieve his objective, with eyes filled with tears and a harsh tone repeated his objective in another form and pleaded with the Imām to accept his contention. The Imām smiled and stated: “Mr. Anṣārī, you have made a mistake in your calculations. Secondly, why are you becoming emotional? Be in control of your emotions.” Then when he saw his hapless condition, he sat with perfect graciousness that: “Go with this doctor and other individuals and bring to me your plans so that I say to you what must be done.” We were overjoyed that the Imām had finally accepted and I kissed Mr. Anṣārī out of sheer joy and told him that, “So many prominent theologians of Qom requested him in the present circumstances to relocate to a secure location but he had not accepted and now it was good that the Imām had accepted under the influence of your words!”

Less than ten minutes later, Ḥāj Aḥmad gave us a ring and said: “Don’t waste your time. The Imām wanted to be excused in a polite manner and did not want to tell you to get out. Therefore, he asked you to go and bring your plans to him.” And just now he told me that I will definitely not relocate to another place.”¹

Promise of victory at the pinnacle of misery

One day I was received in the presence of the Imām. I was thinking to myself that perhaps the reports concerning the war were not being communicated to him precisely and perhaps he was not informed and it was better if I myself went and relayed the information from close. However, I noticed that the Imām gave a smile and with a radiant face that I will never forget stated: Go back and rest assured that you are victorious.” Another clergyman had come from Kurdistān province with a problem and the Imām stated to him that, “These problems are not too important; God willing, we will clear that place of insurgents and when the place has been cleared then your problem will be resolved automatically.” These words of the Imām gave us such a peace of mind that we returned fully charged and resolute to our respective places.²

It is war; sometimes we win sometimes they win

The night of occupation of Khorramshahr city by the Ba‘athist Iraq army was an unforgettable moment for me and other brethren who were informed of

¹ Under no circumstance will I change location: Dr. Pūr-Muqaddas, *ibid.*, pp. 278-280.

² Promise of victory at the pinnacle of misery: Ḥujjat al-Islām Mūsawī Jazāyirī, *ibid.*, p. 281.

every moment of the attack. The telephone would seldom stop ringing and every locality that came under occupation of the bloodthirsty Ba'athist regime was like a rock that banged us in the head. Friends at the office were so profoundly worried that they would only answer the telephone calls. No one had the strength to talk with another. Finally, the time would pass with difficulty and reached to a stage where news of the loss of Khorramshahr port struck us like a thunderbolt. Friends gave me the responsibility of informing the Imām of this ominous news. My throat was choked with emotion and I was concerned that with all that anxiety I would not be able to convey the news properly. Finally, having no alternative I entered the inner room and as I entered the room heads turned towards me with deep concern asking, "What is the news?" God knows that I had rarely been in such a state. I replied unwillingly in the negative. The Imām who had noticed my disoriented condition did not enquire furthermore. I sat down near him and watched the television. After three or four minutes he addressed me and asked: "What is the latest situation?" I replied with great trouble and choked with emotion that they had occupied Khorramshahr port. Suddenly, he responded in an angry tone that, "it is war. Sometimes we win; sometimes they win." I don't know that how these few short sentences impacted me so that in fact it was like the proverbial bucket of cold water poured on my head for it eliminated my sorrow and I felt as if no war had taken place at all.¹

Self-assurance of the Imām in the aerial strikes of Kharg Island

At a point of time in the war when the enemy was intensely and uninterruptedly conducting aerial strikes against Kharg Island and its oil installations, I together with some friends at the office of the Imām, journeyed to Kharg Island. When we entered the island, in keeping with the criteria and procedures that they had in place—because it was the time when normally, the enemy aircraft would appear—our friends requested that we remain in our shelters and visit the port facilities after the aerial bombardment was over. We did not accept and immediately we went to inspect the port facilities.

We were on the jetties when the MIG-29 aircraft appeared overhead and dropped eighteen 500 kilogram bombs on the Island. Some of them dropped into the sea while the rest in various parts of the island but none of them

¹ It is war. Sometimes we win; sometimes they win: Dr. Maḥmūd Borūjerdī; *ibid.*, pp. 286-287.

struck the jetties. However, incidentally one of them dropped right on the building in which we were supposed to take shelter in order to avert danger!

Anyhow, we witnessed the situation from close and returned on Thursday. Although on Friday morning the Imām would normally listen to the 8 o'clock news over the radio and then immediately go to take a bath, but when we told him that we had visited the Kharg Island, he sat to listen. We reported the situation to him and conveyed the message of the authorities over there.

They had said that in the next couple of days, in keeping with the normal procedure, the export of oil would be halted and in that sensitive war situation and foreign exchange difficulties, this was the main worry.

The Imām listened to my words intently and finally, with unimaginable self-assurance prepared to recite supplications. It was a self-assurance that apart from faith and communion with God became clear to us with the passage of time and the uninterrupted export of crude oil until the end of the war—despite all the pressure tactics of the enemy. Although the Imām was not physically present on the island but in comparison with those who were involved in the job, he was better informed of the present situation and future forecasts.¹

Firmness and Dignity

Firmness in infancy

Mr. Pasandīdeh narrated that in his youth, the Imām would stand first in sprinting among the youngsters of Khomein and at the age of eight or nine, he would jump the highest from among his playmates and he even once injured himself. One of the playmates of the youthful days of the Imām would say that in the Sabzīkarān neighborhood of Khomein, the children of the locality did not dare to use foul language and engage in bullying activities out of fear of the Imām.²

¹ Self-assurance of the Imām during aerial strikes of Kharg Island: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmīyān, *ibid.*, pp. 287-288.

² Firmness in infancy: Āyatullāh Mas'ūdī Khomeinī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 134.

Silence embellished with dignity

The Imām possessed a unique dignity, charisma and personality while at the same time being humble. Mostly, he would be silent and speak little. He would try to speak as much as was necessary while his words would be to the point, when he would deliver a speech at a non-public gatherings, he would speak less and reflect more. He would be thoughtful at all moments and make the maximum use of his time.¹

I was mesmerized by the splendor of the Imām

I remember the first day that I called upon the Imām; I was mesmerized by his splendor to the extent that it prevented me from being able to speak because he was always in possession of an inimitable grandeur and magnificence. Martyr Shāhīdī who was an experienced hand of the Imām and was his protégé realized my dilemma and narrated my problem to the Imām who replied to my problem.²

Charisma of the radiant personality of the Imām

One of the interesting points that I noticed in the Imām and which is still etched in my memory was the composed and distinguished look, the movements and the meaningful and calculated silence of the Imām. This was because apart from the handsome face, slim body and radiant personality that were God-given gifts, the black beard, luminous face, the matching turban and extremely clean and spotless clothing that were made locally; his disciplined, timely and penetrating look; the movements of his hands, head and neck when he would sit and stand up in gatherings; his style of speaking with the opposite party and his inexpressible composure and dignity while in a walking position were all in all the hall mark features of the Imām. This was palpable for every onlooker and attracted one's total attention such that any person who was present in the gathering or was passing through a lane or street or was present in the holy mausoleum of Her Holiness Ma'ṣūmah in Qom and would chance to see him, for a long time he would not be able to forget the Imām and while looking at the Imām, he would fail to take notice of others.³

¹ Silence embellished with dignity: Imām-Jamārānī, *ibid.*, p. 321.

² I was mesmerized by the splendor of the Imām: Āyatullāh Yūsuf Šānī'ī, *ibid.*, p. 322.

³ Charisma of the radiant personality of the Imām: 'Alī Davānī, *ibid.*, p. 324.

As if no incident had occurred

The eleven years that I was in the presence of the Imām I Najaf, it never occurred that important political events and incidents to cause the Imām to remain absent from the program of the seminary and teaching Islamic jurisprudence or to undertake these programs with indifference and apathy. On many occasions it occurred for us and many of his protégés that because of varied political events we would either not attend classes or would attend his lectures with lethargy and apprehension. But the Imām at the very sensitive moments when the greatest political crises and incidents and events of his life took place, when he sat on the chair to begin lecturing, he would scrutinize jurisprudential issues in such a way that as if no incident had taken place. On the very day that his beloved son was arrested by the anti-Islamic Ba‘athist regime of Iraq, and taken to Baghdad, there wasn’t the slightest change in the teaching program of the Imām and I can dare to say that he analyzed the various academic debates more extensively and deeply. Also following the martyrdom of his son Martyr Hāj Sayyid Muṣṭafā, he protested to the officials and mentors of the Theological School to refrain from stoppage of classes and activities of the theological school and to begin lessons. When he sat on the chair to lecture, he also resorted to analyze and investigate deeply into the academic discussions such that it appeared as if no incident had occurred.¹

Admiration of the French students for the Imām

Once when we noticed that every night a group of French students were coming to hear the speech of the Imām, we asked them through one of the brethren who spoke French to ask them whether they knew Farsi and could understand what the Imām was saying. To which they replied that, “We are not conversant with Farsi and don’t understand the speeches of the Imām at all!” we then asked them why they would come every night to hear his speeches to which they replied: “When we come here and he speaks, we feel a spiritual transformation take place within us.”²

¹ As if no incident had occurred: Sayyid Ḥamīd Rūḥānī; *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 29.

² Admiration of the French students for the Imām: Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥtashamī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 325.

The translation had not ended that he arose from his seat

In the morning of the day when Edward Shevardnadze, the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union was to deliver the reply from Gorbachev to the Imām, quite the opposite of other days when he entered his meeting room at 8 o'clock sharp, the Imām did not make his presence felt. The foreign minister of the former Soviet Union together with the Islamic Republic of Iran foreign ministry officials stood waiting in the room. Finally, the Imām entered at around 8.30 a.m. And without any interruption and reflection and without looking anybody in the face, he passed through the individuals and took his seat in his usual place. At the same time, the foreign minister of the Soviet Union sat on a chair. As the top diplomat and representative of the superpower of the eastern bloc whose dignified appearance and confident movements at big international assemblies and at the opulent palaces of powerful western states was often viewed on news shootings, had a different stature in this humble and simple room and perhaps for the first time he stood barefooted on an old and discolored carpet at an official meeting as was evident from the slight tremble of his hands while he read out the reply from Mr. Gorbachev. Right from the moment that he sat on a chair he had an unstable reaction as was evident from the state of disequilibrium of his feet—and this state continued until he had finished reading the message. Except for his shaky head and hands, the rest of his body throughout his reception was like a solid and erect statue. The interpreter that according to the knowledgeable would at all places translate Russian with full authority and fluency, was in this situation unable to speak without stammering (and would try to disguise his stammer by forced coughing and clearing his throat often). After the translation of the message of Gorbachev, the Imām without interruption and in the course of one minute and in three paragraphs candidly and unceremoniously expressed his regret at Mr. Gorbachev for not paying due attention to the fundamental subject of his letter. Next while the interpreter began to translate the third paragraph of the Imām's words, the Imām arose from his seat and went to the inner room; and with a combination of awe and speed of movement, brought about such an unprecedented situation that no one was able to move from his seat leave alone get an opportunity to kiss his hand or engage in conversation.¹

¹ The translation had not ended that he arose from his seat: Ḥujjat al-Islām Raḥīmiyān, *ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

He was truly a man of principles

“Mike Wallace”, the television newscaster from America who is also a well-known and reputed journalist of America and was perhaps the first American to interview the Imām, appeared in a program broadcast on channel 4 in America and was interviewed by another famous newscaster in order to narrate his most memorable experiences throughout his broadcasting career. He spoke of everyone and of every place and especially he mentioned that he had met almost all the heads of state and all the great politicians of the modern era and had spoken to them. When he referred to His Holiness Āyatullāh Khomeinī, the leader of the Iran Revolution, with a tone that spoke of his respect and belief while being particularly frank, Mike Wallace said, “I must confess that he is the most intelligent and shrewdest politician that I had ever seen. He had a peculiar impact on the interviewer and instead of me asking him questions, he would manipulate me. Other than the subjects that the Āyatullāh himself wanted to speak about, I was unable to extract any fresh information from this highly adept politician. It was astonishing for me that a clergyman could dominate a person like me who had sufficient expertise in my job.”

Mike Wallace added: “I must say that the extremely simple life that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution had made for himself distinguished him from all other world leaders and we saw that he truly was a man of principles for whom the world and its trappings had no value. When he received me and other world leaders, he would make us to sit on a simple rug and force us to remove our shoes at the entrance to the room. From the start we came to know that we were dealing with a man who was different.¹

Self-respect and Zealousness

I don't wish your personality to be demeaned

One night at the time when the Imām would visit the holy mausoleum of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (‘a), on the way we encountered the Imām in a lane and because we liked to accompany him, we walked behind the Imām towards the holy mausoleum. When the Imām saw us, he stopped and stated: “Gentlemen! Do you have any question?” we replied in the negative but added that we only desired to be with him and it was a pleasure for us. He stated: “Thank God. I thank you for your kindness. You are honorable personalities; you are

¹ He was truly a man of principles: Dr. Amīr Hūshang ‘Askarī: *Mirror of Virtue*, pp. 131-132.

clergymen; you are respectable. I do not wish that your personality be demeaned by walking behind me.”¹

I never saw him make a request

The Imām never made a request from any person or to accept a favor. Throughout the period of my acquaintance, I never saw him make a request to anybody. For example, if a seller would charge a higher price for an item, he would never haggle or bargain and would simply move on.²

God guarantees your sustenance

After the passing away of Āyatullāh Borūjerdī, a number of clergymen and seminary students were distressed. Some were concerned for the Theological School itself while some other short-sighted people were concerned about the financial condition of the theological school. The time for journeying of the clergy in the month of Muḥarram arrived. Some theologians would counsel that when the clerics went to the provincial cities and towns, they should inform the people for financial contributions for the theological school. However, the Imām in his speech stated that, “When you go to the provincial towns and cities beware not to give a bad name to the theological school by begging for assistance. God Almighty guarantees your sustenance and will safeguard this theological school.”³

Do not worry for your sustenance

After the demise of Āyatullāh Borūjerdī, for which the Qum Theological School closed down for forty days mourning, on the first day that lessons began, the Imām in a speech at the Grand Mosque counseled the clergymen stating: “Never be worried for your sustenance.” The clergymen asked that what they needed to do since the passing away of Āyatullāh Borūjerdī to which the Imām replied: “You must have such a lofty spiritual aspiration that the world should not be worth a straw for you.”⁴

¹ I don't wish your personality to be demeaned: Sayyid Ḥamīd Rūḥānī: excerpts from “*The Path of Imām Khomeinī*”, vol. 2, p. 130.

² I never saw him make a request: Āyatullāh Ja'far Subḥānī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 265.

³ God guarantees your sustenance: Āyatullāh Tawassulī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 265.

⁴ Don't worry for your sustenance: Ḥujjat al-Islām Zayn al-Ābidīn Bakū'ī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 266.

The clergy should have self-respect

The Imām desired that the clergymen be decent and have self-respect. At times it happened that some clergymen would come and mention their monetary needs to him and the Imām would not treat them kindly. However, this did not mean that he would not help them. On many occasions I myself would send him a note or write a letter through an intermediary mentioning that so and so person needed some money and the Imām would welcome it with open arms. But if a person was to go and mention his needs directly to him, he would not respond favorably. On many occasions it occurred that some people who were not aware of the Imām's temperament and mentioned their monetary needs to him would find no favor with the Imām and he would convince them that it was not the right thing to do especially if it was in a gathering. The Imām wanted all clergymen to have self-respect vis-à-vis worldly problems and to safeguard their state of trust in God and self-respect.¹

He did not want the clergy to develop the spirit of expectations

Some clergymen would bring levies for the Imām. His attitude towards such individuals was constructive in such a manner that it caused them to lower their expectations and not to lose their self-respect while not making them to lower their dignity and humble themselves for money in front of any person. Some friends suggested that I request the Imām not to be so rigid about such problems but I did not accept because I knew that all the efforts of the Imām were directed at eliminating the spirit of sycophancy, glorification and hypocrisy and if at all it existed in some individuals, it would be wiped out with the tactic of the Imām.²

This manner of pilgrimage is not proper

At one time, some of the Iranian clergymen and scholars of religion entered Iraq from the city of Ābādān illegally and without obtaining entry permits. Thus sometimes they would be arrested by the Iraqi authorities and put into prison and would also be insulted and thereafter, with the intervention and recommendation of the theologians, they would be saved and allowed to perform the pilgrimage in Karbalā and Najaf. One night when I was in the

¹ The clergy should have self-respect: Hujjat al-Islām 'Amīd Zanjānī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 266.

² He did not want the clergy to develop the spirit of expectations: Āyatullāh Muḥammadī Gīlānī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 267.

presence of the Imām, his holiness expressed concern on this subject and stated: “Pilgrimage of the mausoleum of Imām Ḥusayn (‘a) is not at all merited if it involves mistreatment and insult.”¹

I have done you a favor and you are indebted to me

In Najaf a person who owed a substantial debt in Islamic taxes, came to visit the Imām. While paying the levies, the Imām presumed from his words that this individual was doing the Imām a favor to which the Imām protested strongly stating: “I have done you a favor and it is you who are indebted to me for accepting a big responsibility on your behalf.”²

In all my life I never went after money

On many occasions there were people who would come to visit the Imām and would tell him that the pilgrims who went to Mecca acknowledged him as their source of emulation and were his admirers and thus wanted to pay their religious taxes to him. Therefore it was necessary that a person be sent every year to Mecca for this purpose—but he would not agree. Some wanted Ḥāj Muṣṭafā to be sent to Mecca but the Imām would not give his consent till one year Ḥāj Muṣṭafā himself proposed that I go to Mecca on behalf of the Imām and in the role of his empowered trustee to collect the religious taxes from the people. When I was received by the Imām and wanted to take his leave and bid him goodbye, he mentioned a subject that was an extremely great advice for me. The Imām stated: “In all my life, I never went after money. I want that my companions should be likewise.” This was because the Imām had heard that when a businessman came, how some would pursue him or would send people after him in order to meet him and receive his religious taxes. Next he stated to me that: “I must never see you inside the caravans; it is not at all necessary for you to visit a person in the caravans because since you have the power of attorney on my behalf it is likely that some would think that you have come to calculate the people’s taxes and collect their religious taxes. Only if a person comes and asks you to determine an issue, you give the answer whereas if a person wants to pay you money, then accept it and do not reject it. I will never give my consent to you for going here and there to bring money for me. Let the people make their religious payments in

¹ This manner of pilgrimage is not proper: Sayyid Mujtabā Rūdbārī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 268.

² I have done you a favor and you are indebted to me: Ḥujjat al-Islām Anṣārī Kermānī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 269.

whatever manner that they want. You stay where you are and whoever wants to pay the taxes should himself come to you.”¹

You must not mention my name at all

Before the Imām was forced into exile, the owner of one of the big industrial units of Tehran built a mosque and requested the Imām to nominate a person to propagate the religion for the people. Initially, the Imām accepted this matter with great reluctance but after nominating a cleric and at the time of dispatching him, the Imām stated: “In addition to propagation and enlightenment, your duty is to keep in mind two things. First, that in this mosque there must be no mention of my name; and second, your attitude towards the founder of the mosque should be such that he does not get the impression that you covet his wealth and assets.”²

I will not make a plea

We continually witnessed the aggressive tactics of the Imām in relation to the oppression of oppressors and the tyranny of tyrants and in relation to the infidelity of the Ba‘athist regime of Iraq on various occasions. A case in point was when the late Āyatullāh Ḥakīm went to Baghdad to stage a protest against the Ba‘athist regime. Muslims and Shi‘ites from across Iraq would come to visit him in large groups and this by itself was viewed as an anti-Ba‘athist regime move that would take place. Thus the Ba‘ath regime of Iraq broke into the residence of Āyatullāh Ḥakīm and placed a cordon round it, closed the door of the house and arrested all those who went to pay him a visit. As a result Āyatullāh Ḥakīm went to Kūfah in protest and stopped his classes. Towards the end of his life this global Shi‘ite source of emulation departed from this world in isolation and innocence. The theologians of Najaf, out of fear and horror lest they be inflicted with the wrath and fury of the Ba‘ath regime, would avoid paying visits and being cordial with him. However, it was the Imām who with his characteristic courage would send the late Ḥāj Muṣṭafā everyday to see him at his residence. It was at this juncture that the Ba‘athist regime of Iraq arrested Ḥāj Muṣṭafā and transferred him to Baghdad. An aura of fear and terror gripped Najaf. All would come in groups to the residence of the Imām and wanted that he officially ask the Ba‘ath regime of Iraq to release Ḥāj Muṣṭafā because everyone feared that they would inflict some disaster on him. However, the

¹ In all my life I never went after money: Āyatullāh Khātāmī Yazdī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 271.

² You must not mention my name at all: Āyatullāh Ḥasan Ṣāni‘ī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 273.

Imām responded saying that, “A struggle incorporates these hardships and bitterness; one who steps in this path never makes a request from his enemy; and even if they kill Muṣṭafā, I will not make a plea to them for his release.” For almost a week, Ḥāj Muṣṭafā languished in a prison in Baghdad and no one had any news from him.¹

I will not intervene personally

The Imām judged that he should not make a plea or request from a person in whom he had no faith and regarded him as being among the unjust and wrongdoers. This was his premise. At one time, a group of members of the Muḥāhidīn-e Khalq Organization in Iraq were arrested. Turāb Ḥaqq-Shenās had come to Iraq in this connection and carried a letter from late Āyatullāh Ṭāliqānī written in invisible handwriting for the Imām. I went with him to see the Imām. When he was received by the Imām, he exposed the letter. In order that he would know for sure that Ḥaqq-Shenās had come on his behalf, Āyatullāh Ṭāliqānī had recalled from memory their get-together with Mr. Zanjānī that he had asked Mr. Ḥaqq-Shenās to narrate to the Imām. Late Āyatullāh Ṭāliqānī had also sent a message for me through Mr. Ḥaqq-Shenās so that I would be sure that he was sent on his behalf. Of course this message also recalled from memory a meeting between me and Āyatullāh Ṭāliqānī from behind bars. From this message, Āyatullāh Ṭāliqānī intended to request the Imām to ask the Iraq authorities to release this group. After these events the Imām stated: “I must think about it.” next day when we he received us he stated: “I will not intervene personally because if I make a plea to the Baathists, I will be indebted to them in the future and they too will ask me for something.” I gave some explanations so that perhaps it would be effective but he stated: “If right now Mr. Ṭāliqānī and Mr. Zanjānī would be sitting here and both of them would request me to do this, I will not accept because I do not intend to make a plea from a person in whom I have no faith and consider him to be of the unjust and the oppressors; but if you can do something on your own, then there is no objection.”²

I shall go with bare feet to the Fayḍiyyah Seminary

On the day when they broke into Qom and hurled down the clergymen from roofs and upper stories to the ground and would beat them with sticks and stones, when the news reached the residence of the Imām, they requested him

¹ I will not make a plea: Ḥujjat al-Islām Muḥtashamī-Pūr, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 275.

² I will not intervene personally: Ḥujjat al-Islām Du‘ā’ī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 275.

to permit them to lock the door because it was planned that after the Fayḍiyyah Seminary, they would break in to the residence of the Imām. The Imām stated: “No, the door of the house should remain open.” Again, they made a plea saying that it was likely that the commandos of the Shāh attack the residence and demolish it. This time the Imām strongly rejected the idea. The third time when Mr. Lavāsānī proposed that the Imām allow him to lock the door of the house, the Imām stated to him: “Sayyid, get up and leave my house! You are telling me to lock the door while they are beating up my children, wounding them and killing them inside the seminary and I should lock the door of my house to be safe? If you ask me to do such a thing then I will collect my robe and go to the Fayḍiyyah Seminary with bare feet.”¹

Magnanimity of personality

We should take note of this verse that says:

“If there is no duty, one can live happily;

If there is no belonging, one can die happily

In living, simplicity and informality is one of the best reasons for human knowledge as is incorporated in life. Decoration and beautification and falsification in presentation of a personality can by itself prove well human ignorance of the truth of life, personality and development to perfection. Throughout history, we do not know of any developed personality who has attempted to fix a correct image of his personality in the hearts of the people by means of falsifications in living. The magnanimity of human nature places the personality in such a position of growth that he never surrenders to adorning his self with attractive phenomenon for the desirous of the world. Natural laughter, natural tears, natural gaze, natural behavior, simple and refined approach with human beings that are the worshippers of God all together reveal the magnanimity of human personality. This spiritual condition in the Imām was endorsed unanimously by all those who had seen him from close.²

¹ I shall go with bare feet to the Fayḍiyyah Seminary: ‘Alī Ghayūrī, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 138.

² Magnanimity of personality: ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Jihād Ja‘farī: *Mirror of Virtue*, pp. 77-78.

Faith and Trust in God

God willing, it will be resolved

The Imām was extremely firm and decisive in the face of difficulties. I never saw him view a problem as being difficult. All problems in his view appeared to be easy. I never heard him mention that an issue posed a difficult problem. In the face of difficulties, he placed his trust in God and would always say that: “it is no problem; God willing, it will be resolved.”¹

If you are doing it for God, then be patient

At the start of the movement some clergymen in Qom were imprisoned including the late Martyr Maḥallātī. Right then the Imām he gathered them together and stated: “If you did this and went to prison for my sake, I neither have any reward to give you, nor can I do anything for your release. Well, I implore your supplication! If you did it for the sake of God, then be patient and have no fear of these things and do what you are entrusted to do.”²

We didn’t do it; God did it

On the issue of the state and provincial councils, the Shāh’s regime had no alternative but to retreat after the Imām responded strongly and launched a scathing attack. Thus the newspapers wrote that this law was not enforceable. When the clergy who were extremely pleased at the mention of this subject went to meet the Imām, at a gathering of the clergymen, the Imām while offering a brief explanation stated that, “We did not do it; God did it.”³

Put your faith in God

In the Iranian New Year of 1342 (1963-64) when Qom was turned to Karbalā of martyrs and the Fayḍiyyah Seminary into a slaughterhouse a group came to ask the Imām to leave his residence and to relocate to another place for a few nights. The Imām responded to them and said: “Put your faith in God; go away for Khomeinī will not go to any other place from here.” He mentioned the phrase ‘put your faith in God so empathically that the audience began to sob saying that the Imām and the Imām’s state of emotion when uttering

¹ God willing, it will be resolved: Farīdeh Muṣṭafawī: excerpts from... vol. 3, p. 187.

² If you are doing it for God, then be patient: Muḥammad Riḍā Nāṣirī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 222.

³ We didn’t do it; God did it: Hujjat al-Islām Qarahī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 191.

those words was extraordinary. When the Imām would speak of God, his face would become buoyant.¹

As if he saw nothing except God

The worship and relationship of the Imām with God was not something that I could describe. To the extent that I was able to keep in touch with friends of my father and put forward questions on the subject to my mother, all of them opine that the Imām had an exclusive relationship with his God. The Imām was so immersed in God and would speak in such terms about his beloved that one would get goose pimples. It is interesting for you to know that sometimes in times of tragedies and disasters when the authorities would come to see the Imām, he would speak of God in such terms as if saw nothing except God. About the relationship of the Imām with God, there are abundant memories and words that no pen can do justice to the subject. The Imām was a personality who was truly dissolved in his Spiritual Guide; and he would not reflect about anything except Him and feared nothing except God.²

He was always remembering God

The Imām never neglected to invoke God and the invocations were in all circumstances on his lips and deep down in his heart such that on everyday he would recite the specific invocation of that day. While performing ablutions too he would chant invocations and even when he was in hospital, he would make it a point to perform ablutions facing the ‘*Qiblah*’—direction facing the House of Allah in Mecca.³

The future lies with the Almighty God

When the Ba‘athist regime almost placed the Imām under house arrest except for a few close acquaintances, no one had the right to visit him at his residence. A few days later, the pressure decreased. They would increase and decrease the pressure on the Imām several times in order to force the Imām into silence. In one of these stages when they applied intense pressure my late father got in touch with some of the theologians inside and outside the country and requested them to send telegrams in endorsement of the Imām so

¹ Put your faith in God: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 191.

² As if he saw nothing except God: Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeinī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 191.

³ He was always remembering God: One of the security guards of the Imām’s household, *ibid.* vol. 3, p. 193.

that the government of Iraq did not get the impression that the Imām was isolated and can apply as much pressure on his holiness as they could. He himself along with two theologians who had recently arrived in Kuwait sent a telegram to Najaf in which while condemning any kind of restrictions on the Imām, he announced that he was awaiting the orders and instructions of the Imām. These telegrams definitely proved to be useful and beneficial but it was not in the interest of the Imām to respond to them in that era and that too in the form of a telegraphic message. The purpose of the theologians outside Iraq was simply to declare their support and to prevent the government of Iraq from harassing and bothering the Imām. In reply to the telegram of my late father who was his representative in Kuwait, the Imām wrote a letter in which he stated as follows:

In the Name of the Most Exalted; His Holiness Ḥujjat al-Islām Sayyid Mihrī: After greetings of peace and good health, the telegram of His Holiness and that of Mr. Qā'imī besides other telegrams that were not signed was received. I saw it not expedient to give the reply by means of a telegram. After negotiations, they have for the time being halted their previous actions but I believe that this is temporarily. I have in protest asked for an exit permit but they came and promised that they would not interfere. I don't know what course of action will be taken in the future; it lies with the Almighty God...¹

We have delegated authority of our affairs to God

When the agents of the Government of Kuwait recognized the Imām at the border crossing, they did not agree to allow him to enter Kuwait. I was truly overcome with sorrow and asked the Imām why he had left Najaf. He stated: "They threw us out. They sent us away but we came on our own to Kuwait." Twice the Imām was forced to return to Iraq. I asked him whether I should go and speak with the Kuwaiti officer and he responded: "Never, isn't it a pity for you to go and sell yourself to him? We shall return; we are with God." When the Imām felt that I was anxious, during our return journey to Iraq, he gave me one or two words of advice that, "You should not be anxious because our affairs are not in our own hands; we have delegated authority of our affairs to God (reference to a verse in the glorious Qur'an). Whatever He has ordained for us, that is to our benefit."

Thereafter, he began the journey while I did not have peace of mind not knowing what they would do to the Imām then. On his arrival in Paris, the

¹ The future lies with the Almighty God: Sayyid Jawād Mihrī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 200-201.

Imām immediately asked Mr. Ferdowsī-Pūr to call me up as I was very distressed.¹

Trust in God

After the triumph of the Revolution, Yāsir ‘Arafāt came in the presence of the Imām. I along with a few others were at the side of the Imām. At that time the Imām stated to ‘Arafāt that: “If you want to save the nation of Palestine the solution lies in not taking orders from the Soviet Union or America or traveling from this royal court to that royal court. Place your trust in God and take the sword in your hand. God is your patron and the nations will also help you.” If they had acted upon the instructions of the Imām, now the Palestinians would not have become refugees in various Arab countries.²

We have God

On the days after the martyrdom of Dr. Mufattiḥ, the discussion centered round the economic blockade about which the Imām stated: “Although they have imposed an economic blockade on us, however, we have God.” He implied that if they actually do succeed in imposing an economic blockade on us, they are not able to create a blockade for God. No one can impose a blockade on God because all of us are in the presence of God.³ ✍

¹ We have delegated authority for our affairs to God: Sayyid ‘Abbās Mihrī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 200.

² Trust in God: Āyatullāh Martyr Maḥallātī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 194-195.

³ We have God: Āyatullāh Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 197.