

Ibadah to Imam Khomeini (RA)

By: Muhammad Kazim Taqavi

As we read in the Holy Qur'an (51: 56) the purpose behind the creation of man has been 'Ibadah (worship, servitude to Allah, the One and Only God) and obviously is as a crown of honour for humanity, leading them to perfection.

True, sincere 'Ibadah's fruits are many and splendid, including achievement of spiritual upliftment. Imam Ali (as) has taught truly life-giving lessons on 'Ibadah and his prayers and supplications to Allah teach certain divinely-inspired words, including his addressing Allah: "O my God! It is enough of honour for me to be your servant ('Abd)." (Miratul Uqool, vol. 8) So one should regard being a servant of God as a great honour and should likewise consider being educated through His words and guidance as glory.

No doubt, every sincere servant and true man of God has first and foremost devoted himself to servitude to the One God and has thus received more and more Divine blessings and attained high spiritual positions. Imam Khomeini (ra) has certainly been an outstanding ex-

ample of the men of God and His obedient servants and worshippers. Imam Khomeini (ra) who was undeniably a true follower of Allah's last Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has highly enlightening words regarding the worship of God. Let's read parts of his writings in his book entitled "Chehel Hadith" "To open the door of 'Ibadah is Divine Mercy... We know, as human beings having limited abilities, it is not possible for us

to serve God as He should be served, and we cannot know Him as He should be known, since, even the most honoured and spiritually elevated man, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has in his supplications to Him expressed this fact. Yet, we also know that God - the Gracious - has opened the door of worshipping Him to His servants in order to give them high spiritual positions and eternal salvation. He, in His Mercy and Grace, showed the way of happiness to human beings through Revelation and Prophets, teaching them how to serve Him, since spiritual exaltation and eternal salvation can just be achieved through serving God and sincere devotion to His Worship ('Ibadah). Opening the door of 'Ibadah is no doubt, one of the greatest Divine blessings for which all are indebted to Allah and of which the thanksgiving is beyond every human being's power. Rather, each thanksgiving opens the door to another divine blessing for which the thanksgiving is not within our abilities, too..."

He always performed the daily prayers at the earliest appointed time and wore perfume before starting to pray. Also, the recitation of Ziyarat was included in his daily programmes of 'Ibadah. And he would read parts of the Holy Qur'an before prayers, thus making his heart readier for presence in the worship

“As we read in the Holy Qur’an (chapter 3), God is Needless and His creatures are in need of Him. He has no need for our servitude and it has been out of His Mercy and Wisdom that He has opened the door of ‘Ibadah (servitude to Him) to human beings. We owe much to Him and should thank Him immensely for His having granted us the guidance and taught us the ways of worshipping and serving Him and achieving sincerity of intention in our worship.”

Here, let’s ponder upon a hadith from the 6th Infallible Imam, Imam Ja’far Sadiq (as): “Worshippers are of three groups; one group worship God out of fear and their worship is as that of slaves. Another group worship God out of the desire for rewards, such worship is as that of traders. There is also a group that worship God out of love for Him and devotion to Him. Such worship is that of the noble and the high-spirited and is the best worship.” (Al-Kafi, Vol. 2)

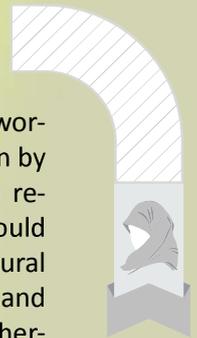
Regarding the manners and required conditions for ‘Ibadah (acts of worship), Imam Khomeini (ra) has many enlightening words, including: “In worship, the worshipper should be mindful of Allah’s Omnipotence and of his/her own weakness and neediness.” (Adab al-Salat, P. 7)

To Imam Khomeini (ra) such mindfulness has been one of the required inner conditions for the worshipper. Also, he has remarked: “The worshipper should try to perform acts of worship with good spirit and attentively and should carefully avoid dis-

tractions and weariness while he/she is worshipping.” (Adab al-Salat, P. 23)

Needless to say, in conditions like fatigue and sleepiness, doing acts of worship can have little, if any, good effect upon our spirit and may rather cause one

to become less devoted to worship. Another guideline given by Imam Khomeini (ra) in this regard is: “The worshipper should be mindful of his/her natural condition in every phase and avoid pressuring himself/herself.” In this connection, Imam



Khomeini (ra) has particularly addressed the youth, advising them to avoid going to extremes and putting too much pressure upon themselves: "If the young people do not treat their own souls with mildness and moderation and if they do not satisfy their natural needs through halal (permitted by God) ways, they may fall into a great danger which cannot be compensated. That danger is that sometimes human beings become restive and disobedient as a result of being under too much pressure." (Adab al-Salat, P. 25)

This fact can be inferred from this Hadith from Imam Sadiq (as): "In youth, I used to do lots of 'Ibadah and was very industrious for acts of worship. My father, Imam Baqir (as), advised me in these words: "My son! Act less, since if Allah, the Almighty, loves a servant, He will be pleased with a little worship done by him." (Al-Kafi, Vol. 2)

No doubt, a worshipper needs the presence of mind to fulfill worship. That is to say, he/she should be able to concentrate on words and keep in mind the greatness of the One Whom he/she is worshipping and supplicating to. According to Imam Khomeini (ra), the worshipper should try to make his/her heart feel the significance of worship in order to make it present in the act of worship.

It should be mentioned here that to Imam Khomeini (ra) 'Ibadah did not just include daily prayers and rather he regarded the Muslim revolutionary people's political activities as among

the greatest acts of worship. In his words: "Your uprising, has been for God and for the liberation of the Islamic Ummah and so any hardship you bear in this way will be regarded as the greatest worship." (Sahife-ye Imam Vol. 4)

Also, addressing the officials and authorities in the Islamic system, Imam Khomeini (ra) pointed out the significance of serving God's servants and regarded that as one of the greatest acts of worship: "Try to work for God and serve God's servants and Islam, for your doing so will be rewarded as one of the greatest acts of worship by Allah." (Sahife-ye Imam Vol. 1)

Needless to say that besides being devoted to serving Islamic Ummah, Imam Khomeini (ra) was also very careful about the ritual (both obligatory and recommended) acts of worships including daily prayers, supplications and recitation of the Holy Qur'an. As narrated by his family members, he would even utter Dhikr (word in praise of God and seeking God's forgiveness) while walking and would recite the Holy Qur'an several times a day and on every opportunity. He always performed the daily prayers at the earliest appointed time and wore

perfume before starting to pray. Also, the recitation of Ziyarat was included in his daily programmes of 'Ibadah. And he would read parts of the Holy Qur'an before prayers, thus making his heart readier for presence in the worship. One of Imam's daughters has narrated, "On a night in the Holy month of Ramadan, I woke up to see my father praying in the dark and crying while having raised his hands towards the sky. In fact, during the Holy month of Ramadan, he would sit up for 'Ibadah all nights..."

Imam Khomeini (ra) was also very concerned about the children's religious education and advised them to perform their daily prayers on time: "So that God would love you more." Imam Khomeini (ra) would also give prizes to his children and grandchildren to encourage them to perform the daily prayers. One of them has narrated: "In my childhood, once I stood behind Imam who was performing prayers and tried to imitate him. This pleased him and he encouraged me by giving me a few books for children as a prize. From then on, upon seeing me, he would ask me whether I had performed my prayers or not, and he would express his pleasure if I said 'yes' and would advise me to pray on time if I said 'no'."

May Allah reward Imam Khomeini (ra) with the best of rewards and may He guide all of us, in particular the youth, to like Imam Khomeini (ra) and the other true servants of God, try to serve God sincerely and become God's true worshippers.

Your uprising, has been for God and for the liberation of the Islamic Ummah and so any hardship you bear in this way will be regarded as the greatest worship