

Foreword

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Human being is the most wonderful and complex creation of God, a creature who, aside from natural and animal instincts and physical reactions, has spiritual disposition and personality, which has made him excel over other living creatures; a being who thinks, chooses, and through rational planning and physical endeavor, he tries to remove the obstacles along the pursuit for a better living.

Along with this venture, he makes his life's history and increases the learning which he has inherited from his predecessors and he paves the way for the future generation to have a more rapid development, more extended dominance over the nature, and further ingenuity in unraveling the unknown and mysteries of creation.

Yet, it is lamentable to note that amidst man's endeavors to attain his desires and yearnings, and the hullabaloo of man's encounter with the nature, an ever more precious truth has been consigned in the limbo of oblivion. That truth is the spirit and essence of man's personality. In other words, it is the "man's primordial self", self-refinement and purification, and nurturing an exalted man—the man to whom God has bestowed a superior station over all creatures.

In understanding this truth, the true and authorized exegetes and expounders of the revelation say, "He who knows himself knows his Lord."

Yes, negligence of the self, overlooking the infinite aspects of man's spirit, and inattentiveness with respect to man's ingenuities in traversing the path of perfections and moral excellences are maladies with which most of the human societies have been afflicted. Technological ascendancy and mechanical living as well as hegemony of the materialists and mammonists over the extensive regions of the world.

On one hand, and the inability of divergent schools and thoughts in presenting a clear direction and exact explanation of man, on the other hand, have exacerbated retrogression and self-alienation. In the midst of this, only the forerunners of monotheism, the prophets and vanguards of the sanctities of values and spiritualities can mould man in the form of their incessant struggle.

And in consonance with the light of reason and the call of natural disposition they have guided human society towards perfection and lofty values. Indeed, the source of pride, great values and true civilizations in the history of mankind, are the outcome of such struggle.

The Islamic Revolution which, to the astonishment of the world, has occurred in the contemporary period through the effort and aspiration of one of the men of God, was in essence not only a political movement or a populist uprising in a bid to overthrow a despotic rule but more than that, it is a moral and cultural revivification that summons the contemporary weak and feeble man to regain his divine natural disposition.

The founder of the Islamic Republic, in his abiding last will and testament under the importance of the great revolution, which he has initiated, said:

“In the world the extent of one’s toils, sufferings and acts of self– sacrifice and self–abnegation is commensurate with the loftiness and worthwhile sublimity of his goal. What you rose for, what you pursue, what you sacrifice your lives and your means for is the noblest of all goals since the creation of the universe till eternity.

It is the divine ideology in the broadest sense of the word and the idea of the unity of God in its lofty magnitude, which is the foundation and final goal of the earthly world and of the Unseen and which idea is fully crystallized in the Muhammadan school, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his progeny, and for the realization of which all the leading prophets and holy saints, peace be upon them all, worked hard.

It is something without which man will not attain absolute perfection or find reunion with the Absolute and the Infinite Beauty of His Divinity. It is this very same thing which has exalted earthlings beyond the rank of those in the celestial world, and the journey to that very destination by an earthling has a consequence solely to him and not to any of His other creatures, visible or invisible.”

In the logic of Imam Khomeini, struggle, involvement in politics and taking over the government is not the objective. The objective is the victory of getting out from the conflict about which God, after successive oaths, says:

“Indeed he who purified it succeeded! And indeed he who polluted it failed!” ¹

That is, the aim is the refinement of man and guiding him from the mundane to the celestial world. The aim is the establishment and creation of a society and environment wherein only God is worshipped, and the beacons of servitude, sincerity and manifestation of faith in the unseen would dispel the darkness of carnal desires and worldly passion.

Let the eyes of humanity see the shining splendor of truth, and make monotheism and its sublime dimensions govern the entire human relations and interactions. All of these are not possible except

through self-purification, a subject which is unknown to the leaders of both the East and the West and for which the weary world of today is thirsty.

The secret behind the greatness of Imam Khomeini's works and the wonder of the influence of His Eminence's pen and thought on his followers should be studied within the framework of this very truth.

Those who are looking for the secret behind the slogan of blood's victory over the sword and the triumph of the armless votaries of the Imam against the most militarily equipped American surrogate government would lead to nowhere they as are looking for political and economic factors in the context of materialistic analyses.

Those who have not heard of, and do not understand, the success of Imam Khomeini in the experience and training in the different forms of struggles against the self and the tussle in the intricate realm of the greatest *jihad* (*jihad al-akbar*), could not also comprehend the quintessence of the Imam's revolution.

The Greatest Jihad: Combat with the Self is the title of the present book and a valuable mystical work which he himself practically traversed for years through spiritual journey, worship and cognition of such perilous route. Before apparently entering the world of political resistance as well as in the midst of his struggles.

Imam Khomeini (*r*), while relying on discussions such as this, used to teach the wayfarers in his path that his course is distinct from the conventional political movements and professional statesmen, and that the real victory in the political, military and economic struggles is in no way attainable except through the greatest struggle and combat with the self.

The topics of this book are a transcription of the discourses of Imam Khomeini in Najaf al-Ashraf, which he delivered at the threshold of the blessed month of Ramadan and other days in the Islamic theological center, 2 and through the initiatives of the Imam's followers, are compiled and published many times before the victory of the Islamic Revolution both in Iran and abroad.

The painful warnings and moral admonitions of Imam Khomeini during those days of hurdle and vicissitude used to arouse zeal of faith and divine motivations to the devoted students and seminarians, separate the course of the movement from the path of those who are alien to self-purification, and sow the seed of sincerity and faith in the hearts of truth-seekers

A seed, which through the divine assistance has finally brought fruit, and the people of the world had witnessed scenes of its miracle during the days of fire and blood, the confrontation between hand fist and weapon in 1357 AHS (1979) as well as the subsequent predominance of the faithful youth in traversing the path of martyrdom and manifestations of indescribable moments of the *basijis'* (mobilization forces') resistance and fervent prayers in the warfronts.

Now, in commemoration of the thirteenth death anniversary (June 4, 2002) of that pious servant of God,

we are pleased to present this enduring literary work with explanatory notes as well as selected quotations from the book and *Munajat* of the Month of Sha‘ban as appendices, to his admirers, enthusiasts and adherents of his sublime and transcendent path.

The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini’s Works

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1. Surah ash-Shams [Chapter: The Sun] 91:9–10 of the Glorious Qur’an.

2. It should be noted that the subjects of the book, The Greatest Jihad, are excerpts of Imam Khomeini’s lectures and admonitions in the different levels of Islamic theology during the days of his residence in Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq (1964–1978), which has been transcribed and compiled by Hujjat al-Islam wal-Muslimin Sayyid Hamid Ruhani.

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