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Preface

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم: إني تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي فإنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض.

The Messenger of Allah – may Allah bestow peace and benedictions upon him and his Progeny – said: "Verily, I am leaving behind two precious things (*thaqalayn*) among you: the Book of God and my kindred (*'itrah*), my household (*Ahlul Bayt*), for indeed, the two will never separate until they come back to me by the Pond (of *al-Kawthar* on the Judgment Day)."

Imam Khumayni – *ridwan Allah 'alayh* – began his *wasiyyah* or will with the mention of this tradition of the Prophet (S), known as *Hadith al-Thaqalayn.* In the prologue to his *wasiyyah* he pointed out that whatever tragedies and disasters befell the Muslim world during the last fourteen centuries have been mainly due to its estrangement from the *Thaqalayn,* the twofold legacy of the Prophet (S) in the form of the Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt (A).

The extent of the estrangement of the Qur'an will be obvious to anyone who closely examines its teachings and contrasts them with the popular religion of the masses and the prevailing religious ethos, even among the scholars and the intelligentsia. There is certainly a wide gulf that lies between the message and spirit of the Glorious Qur'an and the way Islam has come to be practiced in Muslim society, a gulf which has never been as wide as it became in recent centuries under the influence of the West and the tyrannical regimes that have been ruling over Muslims.

The extent of the estrangement suffered by the Prophet's Household will be obvious to anyone who studies the history of the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (A), who were isolated from the Muslim masses by despots and left without support in their struggle against the tyrannical regimes of Banu Umayyah and Banu 'Abbas. The result was that the most authentic exponents and defenders of the Qur'an – whom the tides of time will never separate from the Qur'an until the Day of Judgment, as stated by the Noble Prophet (S) – were put under severe surveillance, exiled, imprisoned, poisoned and martyred, and the masses were deprived of their guidance and leadership.

Having removed the Ahlul Bayt (A) from their way, the road was opened by the self-seeking tyrants for making the Holy Qur'an itself an instrument for the justification of their anti Qur'anic rule. "They forced," as Imam Khumayni says, "the true exponents of the Qur'an... off the stage with various ploys and systematic plans. In this way, they in fact, eliminated the Qur'an itself, the Qur'an which was the greatest program for organizing man's material and spiritual life, and rejected its plan of government based on Divine justice, which was and remains one of the ideals of this sacred scripture. Thus they laid the foundations of deviation from the *Din* and the Book of God, bringing things ultimately to an indescribable extreme."

If today the custodians of American Islam with their petrodollars conspire against the aspirations of the Muslim masses inspired by the genuine Islam, so did once the Umayyad and 'Abbasid tyrants stand in the way of Islam and seek to isolate and destroy its exponents, the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (A), and promote a counterfeit version of Islam. But no matter how much they tried they could not extirpate the Prophet's exhortations regarding the Ahlul Bayt and conceal the unbreakable link between the Book of God and the Prophet's *'Itrah,* in the form of *Hadith al-Thaqalayn* and scores of other traditions similar to it.

This hadith has continued to be narrated by each generation of authentic Shi'i and Sunni traditionists and scholars throughout the last fourteen centuries. Reliable and trustworthy narrators of each generation, from the days of the Prophet's committed Companions - may God be pleased with them - to the present, including many or rather most of the greatest and leading figures in the history of Islamic scholarship have narrated this hadith. It is in view of this undeniable fact that Imam Khumayni declared in his *wasiyyah:*

It is essential to point out that *Hadith al-Thaqalayn* is a *mutawatir* tradition amongst all Muslims. It has been narrated in Sunni sources - including the Six *Sihah* as well as other books - from the Holy Prophet (S) in different wordings, and as having been spoken by him on repeated occasions. This tradition is a definite proof (*hujjah*) for all mankind, in particular for the Muslims, regardless of sect. And all Muslims are answerable (before God) concerning it. For it leaves no room for any excuse for any one. And should there be room for an excuse for the ignorant and the uninformed, there isn't any for the scholars of various schools.

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