

Imam al-Baqir's Traditions on Faith

In his traditions, Ima`m Abu` Ja'far (al-Ba`qir), peace be on him, analyzed the essence and ranks of faith. In them he talked about the qualities of the pious and Allah's favors for them. The following are some of the traditions which have been reported on his authority:

1. The Essence of Faith

Ima`m Abu` Ja'far (al-Ba`qir), peace be on him, limited the essence of faith when he said: "Faith is steadfast in the hearts, and certitude is notions. Then certitude passes through the heart, so it becomes (as strong) as the lumps of iron. And it goes out of the heart, so it becomes (as worn) as the worn rag.

(Hulyat al-Auliya', vol. 3, p. 180)

Indeed, when faith settles in the depth of hearts and inner selves, they become as strong as the lumps of iron. So, they bear difficulties and hardships. Such steadfast belief was the most prominent quality of prophets, the great, and the righteous, who sacrificed their lives for their doctrines and opinions.

However, when certitude comes out of the heart, it becomes as old as the old rag. Thus, the person loses his will and becomes empty of feelings and sentiments.

2. The Ranks of Faith

Ima`m Abu` Ja'far (al-Ba`qir), peace be on him, talked about the ranks of faith, saying: "Indeed the believers have various ranks: one of them has one (rank); one of them has two (ranks); one of them has three (ranks); one of them has four (ranks); one of them has five (ranks); one of them has six (ranks). If you impose two (ranks) on the possessor of the one (rank), he cannot bear them.

If you impose three (ranks) on the possessor of the two (ranks), he will not bear them. If you impose four (ranks) on the possessor of the three (ranks), he will not bear them. If you impose five (ranks) on the possessor of the four (ranks), he will not bear them. If you impose six (ranks) on the possessor of the five (ranks), he will not bear them. If you impose seven (ranks) on the possessor of the six (ranks), he will not bear them. Such are the ranks (of faith).

Surely, the ranks of faith (in Allah) and knowledge of Him vary. Thus, Allah, the Exalted, informed some of His prophets of the secrets of the universe and existence, and the events that occurred in the world. However, He did not inform some other prophets of that, for they were unable to bear that. Ima`m 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, was the gate of the city of the knowledge of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and the store of his secrets and maxims.

He informed Maytham al-Tamma`r, a companion of his, of the misfortunes that would happen at the time of the Umayyads. He informed him of many secrets and the events that would occur at the rest of time. However, he did not inform 'Abd Allah b. 'Abba`s, the great scholar of the community, of that.

For he, peace be on him, was sure that 'Abd Allah was unable to bear that. The tyrants exposed the prophets and the righteous to many tribulations. These tribulations were various according to their various ranks of faith. The greatest of them in tribulation was the Prophet Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his family.

For the tyrants of Quraysh hurt him to the extent that no community had hurt the prophets of Allah before. Moreover, he, may Allah bless him and his family, was hurt after his death. That was when the members of his House were liable to terrible persecutions. Only fifty years passed after his death.

Nevertheless, the heads of his grandsons were on the spears. His granddaughters were taken as prisoners and moved from one country to another. So, which tribulation is greater than this?

3. The Qualities of the Pious

In a group of his traditions, Ima`m al-Ba`qir, peace be on him, talked about the high qualities of the pious. The following are some of the traditions which were reported on his authority:

A. He, peace be on him, said: "The pious are the easiest of the people of the world in provision, and most of them in help. When you forget, they remind you. When you mention your (need), they help you. They believe in the right of Allah. They undertake the affairs of Allah. (Shadharat al-Dhahab, vol. 1, p. 149)

These are the qualities of the unique ones who are the strength and ideals of people, who lead them to the way of guidance.

B. He, peace be on him, said: "When the believer is pleased, his pleasure does not make him

enter sin and falsehood. When he is indignant, his wrath does not drive him out of saying the truth. When the believer is strong, his strength does not take him out to exceed what is right. [\(Al-Khisal, p. 101\)](#)

The believer should have strong a character and behavior. Moreover, he should follow the truth in all circumstances.

C. He, peace be on him, said: "Riches and glory wander about the heart. When they reach the place where the trust (in Allah) is, they settle in it.

[\(Safwat al-Safwa, vol. 2, p. 61\)](#)

Al-Yafi'i composed poetry about this wisdom, saying:

Riches and glory wander about the believer's heart.

When they find the trust (in Allah) in the cavity of the heart, they reside in it.

So, the slave is submissive to Allah.

When they (riches and glory) do not find it (trust in Allah), they depart.

[\(Mir'at al-Jinan, vol. 1, p. 248\)](#)

D. The difference between faith and Islam: Ima`m al-Ba`qir, peace be on him, talked about the difference between faith and Islam. He said: "Faith is in the heart. Islam regulates marriage, inheritance, etc. It prevents blood from being shed. Faith is the partner of Islam, while Islam is not the partner of faith. [\(Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p. 297\)](#)

Faith settles in the hearts of the pious and of those who turn to Allah, the Most High, in repentance. Through faith they fear Allah and are afraid of His punishment. So, they leave no obligation nor do they commit any sin. As for Islam, it is the word of monotheism. When it enters the depth of the heart, the Moslem becomes a believer.

To this meaning the holy verse refers:

"The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You do not believe, but say we submit; and faith has not entered your hearts yet. [\(The Holy Qur'an, al-Hujurat, 14\)](#)

In another tradition, al-Ba`qir, peace be on him, mentioned the difference between faith and Islam. He, peace be on him, said: "Faith is acknowledgment and action; Islam is acknowledgment without action. [\(Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p. 297\)](#)

F. Allah's gift for the believers: Allah granted the believers many of His favors. Ima`m al-Ba`qir, peace be on him, talked about these favors of Allah, saying: "Indeed Allah has given the believers three qualities: glory in his religion in the world, success in the hereafter, and dignity in the hearts of people. [\(Al-Khisal, p. 133\)](#)