

Decision of Tradition

Decision of Tradition (Hadith)

In our collection of traditions there are about 100 traditions that address the rationale behind taqleed. Some of them declare taqleed mandatory (wajib), such as Sahiha¹ Ishaq Bin Yaqub. This authentic tradition by our Current Imam Hujjat Ibnul Hasan (as) is as follows:

"اما الحوادث الواقعة فارجعوا فيها إلى رواة حديثنا فإنهم حجتي عليكم وانا حجة الله"

“In your lives when you face new problems never heard of before, consult with narrators of our traditions to find out the rules and regulations on how to deal with the new situations. Following them is mandatory (wajib) on you because I command you to do so and following me is mandatory (wajib) on you because Allah commands you to do so.” ²

Some intellectuals had difficulty getting to the real message of the Great Imam (as) in this saying. Therefore, they started saying that the Imam had used the word “Ruwat” instead of “Fuqaha” in this saying. However, regarding taqleed and ruju (consultation) it needs to refer to fuqaha.

To explain it further, at the time of this saying, an average man was accustomed to the words riwayat and rawi (tradition and tradition narrator); and hadith and muhadith (saying and saying narrator). That is why these words were typically used. Then when the light of knowledge started to shine and religious literature began to take shape, use of certain words became common; such as, fiqh (jurisprudence) for getting to the core of a piece of writing, taqleed for obedience with understanding, mujtahid and marja for the individual to be followed in religion with knowledge.

You see, this is the nature of evolution that affects different facets of life. When wisdom and knowledge require them, new words spring up as the vehicles to explain certain ideas and then they gain acceptance in the society.

Some people, who are stuck in their scholarly pride, also decree that in this saying the Imam directs us

to consult the fuqaha only in cases of calamities; i.e. only if you face certain difficulties, you need to ask an authentic personality of the fiqh world. Whereas, this saying applies to all issues that affect a person's individual as well as collective life in the society until doom's day.

Also it is important to pay attention to the fact that the Arabic word alhawadith is the plural form of hadtha but in Arabic literature, the language of muhadith and that of fuqaha, it does not mean the same thing as accident in English. Here alhawadithul waqia refers to all new situations that an individual comes across.³

Another fact to consider is that the Current Imam (as) on one hand directed common people to consult fuqaha of their time to seek solutions to new problems, on the other hand he declared these fuqaha as the authority. So it is mandatory (wajib) to follow their instructions just like it is mandatory to follow Imam's instructions. The saying also conveys the message that there is accountability for disobeying the fuqaha just like there is accountability for disobeying the Imam.

Some scholars doubt the authenticity of this saying. They claim that the tradition narrator is Ishaq Bin Yaqub who is not a known personality. However, the fact is that in the scholarly world Ishaq Bin Yaqub is not an unknown person. He is the brother and teacher of a reliable friend of Islam, Muhammad Bin Yaqub Kalini. None of the greats of the world of hadith have called him a weakling. In addition, Al Rejal, the author of Qamus (Arabic dictionary) has also authenticated him.

In addition, the referenced saying has been quoted by Sheikh Saduq (died 381 H) in Kamal Uddin; Sheikh Tusi in Ghaibat; Tibrisi in Ihtejaj; and Allama Hurr al-Amili in Wasayl ush-Shia. They have all listed Muhammad Bin Yaqub as the source.⁴ 2 If such hadith specialists consider this saying authentic, there is no place for any doubters.

There is another tradition on this subject by Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as):

"لا يقبل الله عملا إلا بمعرفة"

"Any deed done without knowledge and understanding will not be accepted by Allah."⁵

Similarly Imam As-Sadiq (as) told Humran Ibn Aain:

"انما يهلك الناس لأنهم لا يسألون"

"Destruction is the fate of those who hesitate to seek answers to problems."⁶

The leader of martyrs, Hazrat Imam Hussain (as), guides like this:

"مجاري الامور والاحكام بيد العلماء الادلاء على الله والامناء على حاله وحرامه"

"The authority for running the affairs of the society and getting all commandments of sharia executed lies with those religious scholars who get Allah acquainted and who have been entrusted by Allah with the responsibility of answering questions of lawful and unlawful."⁷

In the same context another saying called Maqbula⁸ 1 Umar Ibn Hanzala is referred to Imam As-Sadiq (as):

من كان منكم ممن قد روى حديثنا ونظر في حلالنا وحرامنا وعرف أحكامنا فليرضوا به حكما. فإني قد جعلته عليكم حاكما فإذا حكم بحكمنا فلم يقبله منه فإنما استخف بحكم الله وعلينا رد والرد علينا الراد على الله وهو على حد الشرك بالله."

"Who amongst you narrates our sayings, keeps an eye on our declared lawful and unlawful issues, has the knowledge of our commandments, you should accept his decisions with your heart. And you should understand that I have made him your ruler. Also if his decisions are according to our teachings and if someone does not follow those decisions, then let it be understood that he is insulting Allah's command and he is denying us. And whoever denies us will be censurable for denying Allah and will be at the threshold of polytheism (shirk)."⁹

And now here are a few traditions of Chaste Imams that prove that in their respective times they themselves introduced various wise persons who could provide sharai commands and solve the religious issues.

Shoaib Aqarqufi asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "when there is a need who do we ask questions of sharia?" Hazrat responded:

"عليك بالأسدي"

"Ask Abu Baseer Asadi."¹⁰

Similarly we receive guidance from the following tradition of Imam As-Sadiq (as):

Abdullah Ibn Yafur asked the sixth Imam, "my lord, if someone asks me a sharai question, neither can I come to you for the answer every time, nor can I myself provide a satisfactory answer." The Imam responded:

"فما يمنعك من محمد بن مسلم الثقفي فإنه قد سمع أبي وكان عنده مرضيا وجيها"

“OK, then why don’t you consult Muhammad Ibn Muslim Saqafi? He has listened to my father and he had my father’s blessings and he was considered one of trusted people.”[11](#)

Another saying of Imam Ja’far As–Sadiq (as): Younus Ibn Yaqub says, “we were in the sacred company of Imam As–Sadiq (as). During conversation Imam said:

"أما لكم من مفرع؟ اما لكم من مستراح تستريحون اليه؟ ما يمنعكم من الحارث بن المغيرة البصرى؟"

“If you have no place to get peace of mind and cannot get solutions to your problems, then what is the difficulty in visiting Haris Ibn Mughaira Basari?”[12](#)

Eighth Imam Ridha’ (as) is quoted by Abdul Aziz Ibnul Mohtadi and Ali Ibn Yaqtin, that we asked Imam, “Your honor, we live far away from here. We cannot visit you very often. Please tell us how we can seek religious knowledge. Can we count on Younus Bin Abdur Rahman?” The Imam responded,

"قال خذ عن يونس بن عبد الرحمان"

“Yes, benefit from Younus Bin Abdur Rahman.”[13](#)

Same question was asked by Ali Bin Mussayyab Hamdani. The Imam responded:

"من زكريا بن آدم القمي المأمون على الدين والدنيا"

“In your transactions and problems you should seek judgment (fatwa) from Zikria Bin Adam Qumi because he is honest and trustworthy in the affairs of this world and religion.”[14](#)

Another saying of Hazrat Imam Ridha’ (as) relevant to the subject under discussion:

Abdul Wahid Bin Muhammad Bin Abdoos narrates that the esteemed Imam said:

"رحم الله عبداً احيى امرنا"

“The Lord of all worlds will bless His servant with His divine mercy who keeps our system alive.”

The narrator says that he asked, “Your honor, how can your system be kept alive?”

The Imam responded:

"يتعلموا علومنا ويعلمها الناس"

“By seeking our knowledge and then passing on to others.”¹⁵

And now the names of a few great personalities who were chosen by the Chaste Aimma (as) for providing intellectual guidance and leadership:

● Qasam Ibn Abbas was appointed by Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as) as the governor of Mecca. Amir (as) gave him instructions in a letter as follows:

"فافت المستفتي وعلم الجاهل وذكر العالم"

“Qasam. Give fatwa to those who desire it from you. Teach the ones who do not know and refresh memory of those who do know.”¹⁶

Imam Baqir (as) told Aban Bin Taghlab Bin Rabah:

"أجلس في مسجد المدينة وافت الناس فأني أحب ان يرى في شيعتي مثلك"

“You sit in the mosque in Madina and give fatwas to those who come to get them. I very much like people like you among our Shias.”¹⁷

Muaz Ibn Muslim Nahvi quotes Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as):

“Is it true that you sit in the mosque and give fatwas?” I replied, “Yes, and before leaving I wanted to ask you something in this context. My lord, when I am in the mosque, all kinds of people come to ask questions. If I find someone whose thinking appears to be different from ours, I respond to him according to his own thinking. If the individual happens to be a lover of Ahlul Bayt, I fulfill my obligation by answering according to your teachings. But sometimes it becomes difficult to discern, then I give him several answers with quotations from people of different schools of thought. The Imam (as) responded, “You are doing the right thing. In such situations I do the same.”¹⁸

1. There used to be tradition of all kinds. Then the tradition experts scrutinized all of them and then, based on the level of a certain quality coined a name such as correct (sahih), popular (maqbool), continuous (mutawatir), agreed on (mawasiq), reliable (mo’tabar), weak (zaeef) etc. Therefore, sahiha is a tradition by such narrators who all belong to Shia sect and are considered reliable in all aspects

2. Wasayl ush-Shia – Chapter 11 – Sifatul Qazi – Tradition 9

3. Meaning of Hawdith: Almanjid, Alaab Maaluf, p 121; Al Mufarridat, Raghil Isphahani, p 110; Al Ain, Ibn Mukkaram, p 167, Majmaul Bayanul Hadith, Sami Atif Ul Zain, p 222.

4. Kamal Uddin wa Itmam Un Nema, Abu Ja’far Muhammad Ibn Babu As Saduq, vol 2, p 484, published by Muassasa tul Nashr Ul Islami, Qum; Ghaibat, Sheikh Tusi, p 177; Ihtejaj, Tabrisi, vol 2, p 283; Wasayl ush-Shia, Bab Sifat Ul Qadhi, vol 27, p 140, published by Muassas tul Ahl Albait; Awalim Ul Uloom, Muhaddith Kabir Sheikh Abdullah Al Bahrani, vol 2, p 90, Intisharat Bunyad Farhangi, Qum.

5. Usul Kafi, vol 1, hadith 2, p 35, published by Maktaba Islamia, Tehran

- [6.](#) Usul al-Kafi, vol 1, hadith 1, p 31, published by Maktaba Islamia, Tehran
- [7.](#) Tohful Uqool, p 169, Ibn Shaabatul Harani, published Tehran
- [8.](#) Dr. Saji Saleh, the author of Ulumul Hadith writes, “Maqbool tradition is called ‘sahih’ (correct) and the rejected one is called ‘zaeef’ (weak).” In addition the Shia Scholars state, “A tradition whose meanings are well known among general masses for the purpose of acting on it, is known as maqboola (acceptable).”
- [9.](#) Usul al-Kafi, vol 1, book Fazlul Ilm, p 54, narration 10, published Maktaba Islamia, Tehran
- [10.](#) Rajal Kashi, issue 291, published by Mustafavi, Tehran; Wasayl ush-Shia, vol 27, p 142, Manshurat Muassasa, Ahlul Bayt, Qum
- [11.](#) Wasayl ush-Shia, Hurr al-Amili, vol 27, p 144, Manshurat Muassasa, Aal UI Bait, Qum
- [12.](#) Wasayl ush-Shia, Hurr al-Amili, vol 27, p 145, Manshurat Muassasa, Aal UI Bait, Qum
- [13.](#) Wasayl ush-Shia, Hurr al-Amili, vol 27, p 148, Manshurat Muassasa, Aal UI Bait, Qum.
- [14.](#) Wasayl ush-Shia, Hurr al-Amili, vol 27, p 146, Manshurat Muassasa, Aal UI Bait, Qum.
- [15.](#) Maanil Akhbar, p 180, Wasayl ush-Shia, vol 27, p 140
- [16.](#) Nahjul Balagha, p 457, organized by Dr. Sabhi Saleh, published Beirut
- [17.](#) Rijal UI Najashi, Abul Abbas Ahmad Bin Ali Al Najashi, vol 1, p 73, published Varal Adhvan, Beirut
- [18.](#) Rijal Kushi, p 470, published Mustafavi, Tehran

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