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Removing the Confusion about some Narrations that may seem to indicate the Obligation of remaining Silent during the Era of Occultation

Al-Hurr Al-Amili narrates seventeen narrations in the thirteenth chapter of the section on Jihad in Wasailul Shi'a (the chapter dedicated to rising up militarily before the reappearance of the Awaited Imam).

These narrations may seem to indicate the obligation of remaining silent in the face of atrocities and the oppression of the enemies during the era of occultation and the impermissibility of rising up to establish a just government.

Because these narrations, in their apparent meaning, are considered to be in opposition to what we have discussed earlier, let us end the discussion on the guardianship of the jurist by discussing the most important of these narrations to remove the confusion about their meanings.

The First Narration: the Authentic Narration of Ees ibn al-Qasim

Al-Kulayni narrated with an authentic chain of narration from Ees ibn al-Qasim, who said: *"I heard Abu Abdullah (as) saying: 'Be dutiful to Allah, Who has no Partner, and look after yourselves. For by Allah, a man may have a shepherd for his sheep, but if he finds another man who is more knowledgeable of his sheep than the current shepherd he would oust the first and bring in the second who is more knowledgeable of his sheep than the first.'*

By Allah, if one of you had two souls, one to fight with and try, while having another soul which would remain and act according to what had become clear to it (then you could fight with the first soul). However, a person has one soul only. If it perishes then, by Allah, repentance has gone. You have more right to choose for yourselves. If one comes to you from us, then look carefully at what it is that you are

coming out (to fight) for.

Do not say: 'Zayd rose up', for Zayd was a scholar and a truthful person and he did not call you to himself. Rather he called you to the pleasure of the progeny of the Prophet (pbuh). If he had been victorious, he would have remained loyal to that cause for which he called you to. He rose up against a united (tyrant) ruler in order to overcome him. The one from among us who rises up today, to what does he call you? To the pleasure of the Progeny of the Prophet (pbuh)?!

We make you witnesses that we will not be pleased with him. He disobeys us when there is no one with him, so he would be more likely to disobey us when the flags and banners are gathered around him. The only exception is the one around whom the descendants of Fatima unite, for by Allah, your leader is none except that person around whom they unite.

When Rajab comes, come back (to us) by the Name of Allah, and if you wish to delay (coming back to us) until Sha'ban then there would be no harm in this, and if you wish to fast (the month of Ramadhan) with your families this may be better for you. ¹ Al-Sufayni will be sufficient as a sign for you.'"

The tenth narration of the same chapter is similar to this one. The eleventh and fourteenth narrations are also similar in meaning.

It is apparent from the above authentic narration that at the time of Imam al-Sadiq (as) there were a number of uprisings by the descendants of the Prophet (pbuh) which were not supported by the Imam. They made false claims and disobeyed the Imam of truth.

It is probable that the authentic narration is concerned with the uprising of Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Mahdh, the son of Hassan al-Muthanna, who is known as 'the Pure Soul'.

He rose up claiming to be the Mahdi. Al-Kulayni has narrated with an authentic chain from Abdul Kareem al-Hashimi: *"I was sitting in the presence of Abu Abdullah (Imam al-Sadiq as) in Mecca when a number of the leaders of the Mu'tazila entered upon him. This was around the time of the killing of al-Walid...until he said: they left their affair to Amr ibn Abeed who spoke eloquently and at length.*

Among that which he said was: 'the people of Sham have killed their leader and Allah has made them fight one another and disunited them. We looked and saw a man of intellect, religion, honour and a man worthy of leadership, and that man was Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hassan. We wished to unite around him and pay allegiance to him. We would then become victorious with him.

Anyone who follows us will be from us and we will be from him. Whoever stays away from us, we will leave him alone. Whoever stands against us, we will stand against him and fight him because of his transgression and in order to return him to truth and to those who deserve it. We wished to put this before you so that you may join us because we are not needless of the likes of you because of your status and the great number of your followers.'

When he finished, Abu Abdullah (Imam Sadiq as) said: ‘Are you all of the same opinion as Amr?’ They said: ‘yes’. He then praised Allah and sent blessings upon the Prophet (pbuh)...then he addressed Amr Ibn Abeed: ‘O Amr, fear Allah, and you all, also fear Allah. My father told me, and he was the best of the people of the earth and the most knowledgeable of the book of Allah and the Sunna of His Prophet (pbuh), that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: ‘whoever strikes people with his sword and calls them to himself, while there is someone amongst the Muslims more knowledgeable than him, then he is lost and fake” [2](#)

Therefore, the authentic narration does not indicate the lack of obligation to defend or the impermissibility of rising up in general. Rather, it indicates that the one leading the uprising may be making false claims, such as the one who falsely claims to be the Mahdi. It does not speak against an uprising where the invitation is to truth, such as in the uprising of Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Husain. In short, the authentic narration condemns false claims, while endorsing the true claims.

The Second Narration: the (Marfu’) Narration of Hammad ibn Isa

Al-Kulayni narrated through his chain from Hammad ibn Isa from Reb’i, who related it (without a chain of intermediaries) to Ali ibn al-Husain (Zainul Abidin as): *“by Allah, none of us will rise before the rising of the Qa’im (atfs) except that he would be like a young bird who flies from his nest before his wings have matured. Young boys will take such a young bird and play with him”*.

A similar narration is narrated with a weak chain from Imam al-Sadiq (as) at the beginning of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyah.

As you can see, the chain of narration is incomplete, and this narration would not be considered authoritative except based on the principle of the ‘men of consensus’. In addition to this, the narration is not concerned with setting a legislative ruling and is not saying whether rising against falsehood is permissible or not. If it was saying that rising against tyranny was impermissible, then the Imam (as) would be faulting the uprising of his father Imam al-Husain (as)! Rather, the narration is predicting the future.

What may be meant by the Imam’s words ‘from us’– assuming that the narration was in fact narrated from him– is specifically the twelve Imams (as), meaning that whichever of the Imams rises before the Qa’im would not be victorious because the circumstances would not be suitable.

We also say that knowing that one will not be victorious does not remove the apparent responsibility to rise up if the conditions for an uprising apparently exist. Al-Majlisi has narrated from al-Khara’ij wal Jara’ih of al-Rawandi (a 6th century scholar) who narrated from Mina: *“Ali (as) heard a clamour amongst his army, so he asked: ‘what is this?’ They said: ‘Mu’awiyah died’*.

He (as) said: ‘no he has not, by the one in whose Hands is my soul, he will not die until this community

all supports him.’ They said: ‘so why are you fighting him?’ He (as) said: ‘I want an excuse between myself and Allah, the Exalted’³. The uprising of the Master of the Martyrs (Imam Husain a.s) was for a similar reason.

The Third Narration: The Narration of Sadeer

Al-Kulanyi narrated with an authentic chain from Sadeer: *“Abu Abdullah (Imam al-Sadiq as) said: ‘O Sadeer, remain at home, and be like a cushion therein, and stay there as long as there is day and night. If you hear news that al-Sufyani has risen up, then come to us even if it is on foot’”*.

The sixteenth narration of the chapter is similar to this one, in which Imam al-Baqir (as) says to Jabir: *“stay on the land and do not move a hand or a foot until you see the signs which I will mention to you. But I see that you will not be present for these signs: ‘disagreement among the sons of so-and-so, and a caller who calls out from the heavens...”*

As for the chain of the narration, there is no way of authenticating Sadeer except based on the principle that all of the narrators of Kamilul Ziyarat are trustworthy. As for its indicating the claim, this is disputable because what is apparent from these narrations is that they are giving specific advice to individuals.

If one studies the biography of Sadeer, it becomes apparent that he was one whose emotions would overcome his better judgment. This is why he was taken prisoner for a period of time. He was waiting for the Imam (as) to rise and was insisting on this ⁴. The Imam (as) wanted to clarify to him that he was not the one who would be successful in taking over the apparent Caliphate.

The evidence that Sadeer was among those would not judge the situation well is the eighth narration of the chapter which is narrated by the author of al-Wasail from al-Kulayni with his chain to al-Mu’alla ibn Khunays: *“I took the letter of Abdul Salam ibn Nu’aym and Sadeer and the letters of many others to Abu Abdullah (as) when the Black Army ⁵ were victorious and before the Abbasids were victorious. The letters said that ‘we are able to transfer this affair to you, what do you think of this?’ He (as) threw the letters to the floor and said: ‘Uf! Uf! I am not an Imam for these people. Do they not know that it is when al-Sufyani is killed?’”* Similar to this narration is the fifth narration of the chapter.

The Fifth Narration: the authentic narration of Abu Baseer

This is the sixth narration of the chapter in Wasailul Shi’a.

Al-Hurr al-Amili narrated from al-Kulayni through his authentic chain of narration from Abu Baseer from Abu Abdullah (Imam al-Sadiq as): *“any banner which is raised before the uprising of the Qa’im, its owner is a tyrant who is worshipped besides Allah, the Glorious, the Exalted.”*

This authentic narration is among the most important narrations which are used as evidence for the claim that it is obligatory to remain silent during the era of occultation. The proponents of this view claim

that the apparent meaning of the narration is that the criterion for an uprising being invalid is not its goal, but the time in which it occurs.

Thus they claim that any uprising that occurs before the uprising of the Qa'im (atfs) is invalid and that its leader is a tyrant. The evidence for this rule being general is the Imam's expression: 'any banner' which indicates a totally inclusive generality.

In answer to this claim we say the following: it is a strong probability that this proposition is external and that what is meant by banner in the narration is the banner of falsehood which is raised in a path different to that of the Qa'im (atfs), and that it does not include those banners which are raised in his way and path. This probability is supported by the following:

1-the Imam's (as) expression in the narration: 'its owner is a tyrant, who is worshipped besides Allah...'

2-the words of Imam al-Baqir (as) in another narration: *"Until al-Dajjal appears, no one will call to people unless he will find those who pay allegiance to him. Whoever raises a banner of misguidance, then is owner is a tyrant"* [6](#)

3-The apparent meaning of this narration seems to oppose the authentic narration of Ees (the first narration mentioned in this chapter) and other narrations which praise the uprising of Zayd and similar people whose claim was to truth, among which was perhaps the uprising of al-Husain ibn Ali, the martyr of Fakh. It also seems to oppose other narrations which honour those who prepare the way for the Mahdi. (atfs) [7](#)

4-In fact, if the narration is understood in its apparent meaning, it must be rejected because it goes against the definite evidence we have about both Jihad and the obligation of enjoining good and forbidding evil. How can remaining silent be obligatory, when rising to defend Islam and Muslims is among the most important obligations which the Holy Book, the honourable Sunna and the sound intellect all indicate.

Conclusions

From all that we have said, we can reach a number of conclusions:

-the first: these narrations, in addition to the weakness of some of their chains of narration, and the fact that they do not indicate the claim in question, cannot stand against the definite evidence which rules that both Jihad and the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil are obligatory, as well as the definite evidence that indicates that establishing the laws of Islam and defending the Muslim lands and affairs as much as is possible is also obligatory.

Allah, the Exalted, has said:

“And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and of the weak among the men and the women and the children, (of) those who say: Our Lord! cause us to go forth from this town, whose people are oppressors, and give us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper.”⁸

He, the Glorified, has also said:

“And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty.”⁹

Yes, it is obligatory to prepare the appropriate power and means for an uprising. Otherwise, would an intelligent person be satisfied with leaving the enemies to take control of his people, invade their lands, spill their blood and destroy their countries while he remains in his house and does nothing but remain silent and submissive before all this?

The only one who may do this is an advisor to the tyrant rulers and the scholars of evil who have bought misguidance in exchange for guidance, and the American dollar in exchange for the benefits of the Muslim community.

–the second: these narrations are external propositions and not real propositions. This is supported by the fact that the vast majority are narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) during the time of the fall of the Umayyads and the great number of uprisings.

–the third: it is probable that some of these narrations are a fabrication by the tyrant rulers in order to turn the Shi'a away from the idea of an uprising against their oppressors, similar to what is happening in our time about the distortion of the meaning of 'Jihad' and its false interpretation as meaning only the struggle against one's self.

–the fourth: some of the narrations are specific to those who raise banners of falsehood, who were calling people to themselves. This was leading to an unnecessary loss in Muslim lives.

–the fifth: some are concerned with a specific person or specific situation, where the conditions and prerequisites for an uprising were not present.

–the sixth: some were said out of dissimulation before tyrant rulers. Perhaps the narration of al-Mu'alla ibn al-Khunays, which is mentioned after the fifth narration, is among these.

–the seventh: some were not concerned with setting a legislative rule but were making a prediction about the future only.

Our last call is Praise to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

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- [1.](#) It is obvious that the holy Imam (as) is trying to buy time and keep his followers out of trouble
- [2.](#) al-Kafi, 5:23
- [3.](#) Biharul Anwar, 41: 298
- [4.](#) In the fourth chapter, at the end of the fourth narration, we have mentioned the conversation between him and Imam al-Sadiq (as), so refer to this
- [5.](#) The black army were the followers of Abu Muslim al-Khurasani. They were called this because their attire and banners were black. At the beginning, Abu Muslim was sent to Khurasan by Ibrahim al-Abbasi. When he died, Abu Muslim began to call to his brother, al-Saffah. In the end, al-Mansur al-Abbasi became jealous of him and killed him.
- [6.](#) al-Kafi, 8:29
- [7.](#) al-Kafi, 8:296
- [8.](#) Refer to ayah 4:75
- [9.](#) Refer to ayah 22:40

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