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14) Piety And Islamic Rules

Rules made by God Almighty are binding and it does not make any difference whether they are real or superficial (apparent), for benefits and harms in them have been taken into consideration. Therefore, when a religious authority issues a religious decree, he should be careful not to let his own opinion interfere in his Fatwa. Ibn Shabramah has been reported by Ibnul Sheikh in his Majalis from Husayn ibn Ubaydillah al-Ghadha'iri as saying: "Abu Haneefah and I went to see Imam Sadiq (AS).

I said: 'God has honored you. This is a man from Iraq, who has an understanding of religion and wisdom.' Imam Sadiq (AS) said: 'Perhaps he is the one who interprets religion due to his own opinion.' Then the Imam (AS) said: 'Which one is greater, prayer or fasting? I said: 'Prayer.' The Imam (AS) said: 'Why is it that a menstruating woman has to fast the missed days of fasting, but she does not have to perform the missed prayers (because of menstruation)? O Servant of Allah, fear Allah."[1]

1. Taqiyyah

If a servant of Allah wants to observe a real rule which entails risk, it is unlawful. He has to observe the superficial rule. Traditions on dissimulation (Taqiyyah) [2] which has the same root as Taqwa refer to the same meaning.[3]

Dissimulation is a kind and the highest degree of piety. Abdullah ibn Jundab has been reported by Hammad ibn Eesa as saying: "Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS), in giving the meaning of this verse: "Surely, the most honorable of you with Allah is the most careful of his duty", has said: 'It is the one with the utmost piety.'"[4]

Abdullah ibn Ya'foor reports: "I heard Imam Sadiq (AS) say: 'Taqiyyah is the shield and the protector of a believer. One who has no Taqiyyah is not a believer." [5]

Imam Sadiq (AS) has also been reported as saying: "There is nothing better than 'Khaba' to God in worshipping Him. I asked what 'Khaba' is, and the Imam said: 'It is the same as Taqiyyah.'" [6]

There are many traditions on Taqiyyah which mean sometimes that man should conceal his faith in order to protect his own life and sometimes the lives of others.

At some times, it is necessary for a Muslim to perform his religious duties like the opponents. Sayyid Murtadha (may Allah have mercy on him) has mentioned in his book al-Muhkam wel-Mutashabih that Imam Ali (AS) said: "When man has the option, he has been forbidden to take an unbeliever as his leader of Imam. Nevertheless, God has obliged man by giving him permission (dissimulation) to fast as the opponents fast, break his fasting like them, and perform prayer as they do out of Taqiyyah. Otherwise, it is incumbent upon him to follow his own beliefs.

God Almighty has said: ***"Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; and whoever does this shall have nothing of*** (***the guardianship of***) ***Allah, but you should guard yourselves against them, guarding carefully; and Allah makes you cautious of Himself."***[7]

Therefore, dissimulation is a blessing that God has given to the believers so as to save themselves and others. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has said: "Allah likes His servants to observe what He has permitted and what he has forbidden." [8]

2. Ablution (Wudu')

Dawood ar-Raqqi has been reported as saying: "One day, I went to Imam Sadiq (AS) to ask him how to perform ablution correctly. The Imam (AS) said: 'What God has made obligatory is to wash the face once. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has added one more to it to mind for the weak people. Whoever washes his face three times, his prayer will become invalid.' At this time, Dawood ibn Zurbi arrived and asked the same question. The Imam (AS) said: 'Three times, three times and whoever does less than that, his prayer is not valid.'

My (Dawood ar-Raqqi) body started shivering. I was being almost tempted by Satan. Seeing a change of color in me, Imam Sadiq (AS) said: O Dawood, calm down! Which one is of unbelief, this order or the act of beheading?'

When we went out, we found that people had spoken ill of Ibn Zurbi before al-Mansoor ad-Dawaneeqi (the Abbasid caliph), accusing him of being heretic and associating with Imam Sadiq (AS). Ibn Zurbi was in an orchard near the orchard of al-Mansoor.

Al-Mansoor said to himself: "I will try him to see how he performs his ablution. If he does it like Ja'far ibn Mohammad (AS) which I do not approve, it will become evident that what they say about him is true. In that case, I will kill him." Therefore, he waited for Ibn Zurbi to perform ablution. Ibn Zurbi did as Imam Sadiq (AS) had told him. Al-Mansoor sent someone to call him.

Dawood says: 'When I went to al-Mansoor, he greeted me, saying: 'O Dawood! They have said

something wrong about you. The way you performed ablution was not like the purification by the heretics, so forgive me.' Then he ordered a hundred thousand Dirhams to be given to him.'

Dawood ibn Zurbi and I went to see Imam Sadiq (AS). Zurbi said: my master, you save my life in this world. Thanks to you. We hope for paradise. The Imam said: 'May God reward you and all the believers.'

Addressing Zurbi, the Imam said: 'Tell Dawood ar-Raqqi what happened to you so that he will have no fear.'

Dawood Zurbi says: 'I told him the whole story. The Imam (AS) said: 'It was for this reason that I issued such a Fatwa for him, knowing that he may be killed.' Then, the Imam said: 'O Dawood ibn Zurbi! Wash your face twice when performing ablution. Do not add, for if you add to it, your prayer will become invalid.'"[9]

The same story happened between Ali ibn Yaqteen and Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) who first ordered him to perform ablution like the opponents, and when the danger of Haroon ar-Rasheed (the Abbasid caliph) had gone, in a letter, he said: "O Ali ibn Yaqteen! Perform ablution as God Almighty has ordered... for the danger that we were afraid for you of has gone."[10]

3. Prayer

Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (AS) has been reported by Ali (AS) ibn Yaqteen and Sheikh Sadooq as saying: "When dissimulating, it is valid to prostrate on clothes and carpets." [11]

Imam Reza (AS) has been reported by Bazanti as saying: "In relation to Qunoot (supplicating Allah earnestly in the prayer), Imam Baqir (AS) has said: "You have an option to or not to recite Qunoot."

Imam Musa al-Kadhim(AS) has said: "When you are in Taqiyyah, do not recite Qunoot, and I will be answerable for that."[12]

Abdullah ibn Sinan reports: "I heard Imam Sadiq (AS) say: "I invite you to fear Allah. Never be tough to people, for you will be abased. God Almighty has said: ***"...you shall speak kindly to people."***"[13]

Then the Imam said: "Visit their (non-Shia Muslims) patients, take part in their funerals, bear witness for and against them and perform prayers with them in their mosques."[14]

Imam Sadiq (AS) has also been reported as saying: "Whoever performs prayer with them in the first line is like one who has performed prayer behind the Messenger of Allah (SAW) in the first line." [15]

In another narration, we read that the Imam said to Isshaq ibn Ammar: "Take part in their prayer, for whoever performs prayer in the first line with them, is like one who has drawn the sword in the way of Allah."[16]

4. Fasting

There are numerous traditions on fasting in which the infallible Imams (AS) did not observe fasting to cope with the tyrant caliphs. One of the companions of Imam Sadiq (AS), who had come to visit him, said: "Would you break your fasting on a day of Ramadan?" The Imam said: "Yes, by Allah! To violate my fasting in a day of Ramadan is better to me than to be beheaded."17

From what we have said, it is inferred that we have to do what is obligatory and to avoid what is forbidden when there is no obstacle on the way. But, in certain circumstances, we have to forsake an obligatory act and do something forbidden in order not to appear as opponent (to others). We should practice Taqwa in a way that if our Imam divides a pomegranate into two and says that this part is lawful and the other part is unlawful, we should unconditionally accept it. We should say to ourselves: What the Imam says is exactly what the prophet and God say.

As Taqiyyah is applied in the Islamic rules, it is applied in relation to ideology too. There are many narrations in this connection. Imam Sadiq (AS) has said: "Be careful of your religion. Conceal it with Taqiyyah, for there is no faith for one who does not observe Taqiyyah. You are like a honeybee among birds. If a bird knows what is inside a honeybee, it will keep on eating the honey until nothing remains of it. If the opponents know that there is the love of the Ahl al-Bayt in your hearts, they will eat you with their tongues and will curse you openly and secretly. May God bless a servant who follows our guardianship (wilayah)."

In some traditions, Imam Ali (AS) has said: "Soon, you will be asked to curse me. Curse me, but when you are asked to disavow me, do not do it, for I am on the Fitra (nature of true faith)."18

In certain narrations, we read: "Do not do it (do not disavow me) even if you are killed."

It is well to mention that Taqiyyah is not a feature of our time, rather it was part of the rules of former religions too. The Companions of the Cave, the believer of Aal Firoun (the family of the Pharaoh), and Assiyah wife of the Pharaoh are good examples.

On the concealing of faith by Abu Talib, Imam Sadiq (AS) mentions the example of the Companions of the Cave, saying: "The example of Abu Talib is like the Companions of the Cave, who concealed their faith and declared atheism. So God rewarded them twice."19

As for disavowing, Maytham at-Tammar an-Nahrawani says: "One day, Ameerul Mo'minin (AS) called me, saying: 'O Maytham! What will you do if Ubeidillah asks you to declare immunity towards me or he will call you bastard?' Maytham said: 'By Allah, I will never disavow you. The Imam (AS) said: 'By Allah, he will either kill or hang you.' Maytham said: 'I will endure it! This is the least I can do in the way of God!'"20

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported by Mohammad Ibn Marwan as saying: "What prevented Maytham

from practicing Taqiyyah? By Allah, he truly knew that this verse ***"...he who is compelled while his heart is at rest."***21 was revealed in honor of Ammar and his companions." 22

In the exegesis (tafsir) of Qumi, we read: "The tribe of Quraish arrested Ammar in Mecca. They tortured him with fire to compel him to utter what they wanted, but his heart was full of faith. The verse ***"...except he, who is compelled while his heart is content with faith"***23, refers to Ammar ibn Yassir."24

Ammar ibn Yassir is one of the persons whose perfect faith the Messenger of Allah (SAW) has testified. The opponents too have said: "The faith of Ammar is up to his shoulders."

It is narrated that one day Ammar asked the Holy Prophet's permission to enter his room. As soon as Ammar entered the room, the Holy Prophet (SAW) said: "Welcome, O the purified one!"

Ammar is one about whom the Holy Prophet (SAW) has said: "Whoever is the enemy of Ammar is the enemy of God and whoever has rancor against Ammar has rancor against God." Ammar is one about whom the Holy Prophet (SAW) has said: "Paradise longs for four persons: Ammar, Ali, Salman and Miqdad." In another narration, we read: "Paradise longs for Ali, Ammar, Salman and Bilal."25

Ammar was one of those persons, who along with his father Yassir and his mother Sommayyah, lived in the desert of Mecca with sufferings. He was ninety when martyred at Siffeen."26

5. Trade

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported by Ali ibn Abdul Aziz as having asked: "What did Umar ibn Muslim do?" I said: "He has become an ascetic, leaving aside trade." The Imam (AS) said: "Woe unto him! Does he not know that the prayer of one who leaves trade is not responded to?"

Then, the Imam said: "Some of the companions of the Holy Prophet (SAW), who had heard this verse: ***"...and whoever is careful of (his duty) to Allah, He will make for him an outlet and give him sustenance from whence he thinks not"***,27 closed the doors behind themselves, were engaged in worshipping God, saying: 'This is sufficient for us.' This news reached the Holy Prophet (SAW). So he sent for them, saying: "What made you to do so?" They said: "O messenger of Allah! God gives us our sustenance. Therefore, we are engaged only in worshipping."

The Holy Prophet (SAW) said: "Whoever does this, God will not respond to his prayer. It is incumbent upon you to be engaged in a business."28

The Holy Prophet (SAW) and Imam Sadiq (AS) have been reported as saying: "Not being dependent on others is a good example of divine piety."29

Imam Sadiq (AS) has also said: "Cursed is one who is a burden to others." 30

Piety And Trade (Business)

One of the topics dealt with in the Holy Quran and Hadith is the question of trade and business as elaborated in the books of jurisprudence. Some scholars have written separate books on it. In this relation, we can mention Makasib written by the master of jurisprudence Sheikh Ansari, and Anees al-Tejarat written for the Farsi-speakers by Allamah Naraghi, which is the best of its kind. As for books of Hadith, which deal with trade and business, we can mention such books as Wasa'il al-Shiah, and Bihar al-Anwar, one or two volumes of which have been devoted to this topic. In these books, there are traditions on the merits of trade and business and the care one must take in relation to them.

Jameel ibn Salih has reported Imam Sadiq (AS) as saying about the verse: ***"Our Lord! Grant us good in this word and good in the hereafter."***31, "The meaning of good is the pleasure of God and paradise in the hereafter, abundant sustenance, and good temper in the world."32

Imam Sadiq (AS) has reported Imam Ali (AS) as saying to Mawali:33 "Engage in trade, and God will give you blessings, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (SA) say: "Sustenance has ten parts, nine of which are in trade and one part is in other things."34

It has been narrated that Asbaat came to see the Imam who asked after Umar ibn Muslim. Asbaat said: "He is a righteous man, but he has put trading aside." The Imam said: "It is an act of Satan." The Imam repeated this three times and said: "Do you not know that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) bought a flock of sheep from Damascus and sold them with profit in a way that he paid his debt and divided the rest among the relatives.? On this occasion, God revealed the following verse: ***"Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from remembrance of Allah."***35

The Imam (AS) has also been reported as saying: "Leaving trade will diminish one's wisdom."36

It has been narrated: "The disciples of Jesus (AS) were walking behind him and whenever they got hungry, they would ask: 'O Spirit of Allah! We are hungry.' Jesus (AS) touched the earth and water gushed out. The disciples drank from it and said: 'O Spirit of Allah, Who is better than us! When we get hungry, you give us food, and when we get thirsty, you quench our thirst. We truly have faith in you and follow you?'

Jesus (AS) said: 'Better than you is one who works with his own hands and eats from what he himself earns.'"37

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported as saying: "God revealed to Prophet Dawood (David) (AS): "You were a good servant if you did not eat from the public treasury. You do not do work with your own hands!"

Prophet David began weeping. God revealed to iron: "Be soft and lenient for My servant, Dawood!"

God Almighty made iron soft for him in a way that Prophet Dawood (a.s.) would make a cuirass every day and sell it for a thousand Dirhams. He made 360 cuirasses, selling them for 360 thousand Dirhams and was never in need of the public treasury."[38]

Having a share of the public treasury does not necessarily mean a bad thing, but in the story of Prophet Dawood, there was wisdom behind it.

Mohammad ibn Munkadir reports: "On a hot day, I went to Medina where I saw Imam al-Baqir (AS) leaning on two slaves due to his being corpulent. I said to myself: 'A great man of Quraish working at this hour of day in search of the material world! I will certainly give him an advice.' Therefore, I approached and saluted him. While gasping, the Imam (AS) greeted me back. Sweat was pouring from his head and face because of hot weather.

I said: 'May Allah improve your affairs! A great man of Quraish seeking the world at this time of the day! What will happen if death overtakes you in this situation?' Taking his hands away from the shoulders of the two slaves and leaning against the wall, he said: 'By Allah, if death overtakes me and I am in this situation, I will be in a state of obedience to Allah by which I can preserve my value from you and people. I am afraid of death only when I am committing a sin!' I said: 'May Allah bless you! I intended to give you advice, but *you* gave me advice.'" [39]

Furthermore, trade and business must be accompanied with an understanding of the Islamic rules. Al-Asbagh ibn Nabatah reports: "I heard Ameerul Mo'minin say from on the pulpit: 'O group of tradesmen! First, you should learn and know the rules of lawful and unlawful trade and then engage in trade. By God, usury amongst this Ummah is more hidden than an ant walking on a black stone. Let your faith be intermingled with truthfulness. A tradesman is a transgressor and transgressors are in fire unless you give with justice and take with justice."[40]

Imam Baqir (AS) has been reported by Jabir as saying: "Ameerul Mo'minin used to walk in the marketplace with a whip in his hand. He stopped in a place and said: 'O group of tradesmen! Fear Allah!' Then, he would remind them of what was related to trade: usury, selling with underweight, injustice, false oath, besides fairness and justice." [41]

In addition to knowing the rules of trade, a Muslim should act according to his own duty and safeguard the dignity and honor of Muslims and Islam. He should not do anything for which the enemies of Islam will mock at us. A tradesman must be a model for Islam, not a source of dishonor.

He should observe what is recommended and not blameworthy in business or trade. He should practice what is lawful and avoid what is unlawful like monopoly, underweight selling, and usury.

Truly, one of the activities of human beings in the world is business and trade. If transactions are made justly, they are permissible, praiseworthy and even obligatory. However, if they are not done correctly and are contrary to the rules of Islam, they are blameworthy or unlawful.

One of the cases that trade is blamed for is to earn wealth through usury against which God has warned in the Holy Quran: ***"...Allah does not bless usury, and He causes charitable deeds to prosper."***[42]

Elsewhere, God has said: ***"O ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah, and give up what remains*** (***due to you***) ***from usury, if ye are*** (***in truth***) ***believers. And if you do not, then be warned of war*** (***against you***) ***from Allah and His messenger."***[43]

Usury has been discussed in detail in books of jurisprudence and is considered as a major sin. The rulings on it can be found in the same books.

As for the punishment of usury, Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported as saying: "One Dirham of usury to God is worse than seventy acts of incest committed in the House of God." [44]

The Holy Prophet (SAW) has been reported as saying: "One who swallows down usury, God will fill his stomach with the fire of hell as much as he has swallowed down usury. Should he earn a wealth after that, God will not accept anything of his act. God and His angels will curse him, as long as a measure of one carat from usury is with him."[45]

The Holy prophet (SAW) has also been reported as saying: "The worst trade is the one mixed with usury."[46] Such a trade is forbidden in all religions and by all prophets.

Allamah Qutb Ravandi in his book Da'awat has reported: "The Messenger of Allah (SAW), during his night journey, saw a red river with a man swimming in it. On the bank of the river, there was sitting a man with many stones around him. The swimmer would often come to this man and open his mouth. The man sitting on the bank of the river would put a stone in the swimmer's mouth. This was his repeated doing.

The Holy prophet (SAW) asked about it and it was said to him: "He has eaten usury during his life."[47]

Imam Ali (AS) has been reported by Imam Baqir (AS) as saying: "One who eats usury, the agent, the one who writes (the contract), and the two witnesses involved in the dealing of usury are equal in the sin."[48]

Allamah Tabarsi mentions that Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "The Messenger of Allah has cursed five groups of people concerning usury; the eater of usury, the agent, the two witnesses, and the writer (of the contract)."[49]

It is for this reason that the Lord of the universe has made piety obligatory in the matter of usury. Whenever the question of sale and usury are raised, God says, "Fear Allah" so that human beings are warned against it and keep away from this punishment.

Abu Hamzah ath-Thumali has reported Imam Baqir (AS) as saying: "The Messenger of Allah (SAW), during the farewell (last) Hajj, delivered a sermon, saying: "O people! By Allah! There is nothing that

takes you nearer to Paradise and keeps you away from Fire except that I have enjoined on it to you, and there is nothing that takes you near to fire and keeps you away from Paradise except that I have forbidden it. Be aware! Gabriel inspired me that no one dies unless he has fully received his sustenance. Therefore, be careful of your duty to Allah. Behave well in seeking sustenance. Take care not to get anything unlawfully when your sustenance comes late; for what is with God cannot be sought except by obedience to Him."50

1. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 1, p. 75.
2. Taqiyyah means not to disclose or make public one's faith or some articles of faith to the aggressive mischief-mongers, or to those who are not fit to accept the truth.
3. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 11, pp. 459,520.
4. Ibid., p. 466.
5. Ibid., p. 461.
6. Ibid., vol. 11, p. 462.
7. Qur'an, 3:28.
8. Wasail al-Shiah, vol. 1, P. 81.
9. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 1, P. 312.
10. Ibid., p. 313.
11. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 696.
12. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 4, p. 901.
13. Qur'an, 2:83.
14. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 5, p. 382.
15. Ibid., p. 381.
16. Ibid., p. 382.
17. Ibid., vol. 7, p. 95.
18. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 11, p. 478.
19. Ibid., p. 476.
20. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 11, p. 477.
21. Qur'an, 16:106.
22. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 11, p. 476.
23. Qur'an, 16:106.
24. Tafsir of Safi, p. 305.
25. Goroohe Rastgaran (Those who were delivered), vol. 1, pp. 470, 473.
26. Ibid.
27. Qur'an, 65:2-3.
28. Wasa'il al- Shiah, vol. 12, p. 15.
29. Ibid., p. 16.
30. Ibid., p. 18.
31. Qur'an, 2:201.
32. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 12, p. 3.
33. Mawali (plural form of mawla) means "one's manumitted slaves".
34. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 12 p. 5.
35. Qur'an, 24:37.
36. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 12, p. 5.
37. Safeenat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 478.
38. Ibid.
39. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 12, p. 10.

40. Ibid., p. 282.
41. Ibid., p. 284.
42. Qur'an, 2:276.
43. Qur'an, 2:278–279.
44. Safeenat al–Bihar, vol. 1, p. 507.
45. Ibid., p. 505.
46. Ibid., p. 507.
47. Ibid., p. 507.
48. Wasa'il al–Shiah, vol. 12, p. 430.
49. Ibid.
50. Al–Kafi, chapter of piety.

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