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34. On Dissimulation (At-Taqiyyah)

*Abu Ja'far says: "Chapter concerning at-taqiyyah"*1. ash- Shaykh al-Mufid adds: Dissimulation is disguising the truth and concealing belief therein, reticence in the face of one's opponents and refraining from divulging to them that which might result in injury to one's religious or worldly welfare. It is obligatory only when injury is absolutely certain, or the presumption of it is very strong. But if it was not certain or obvious that harm would not result from disclosing the truth, nor was the presumption strong, then dissimulation is not obligatory.

The truthful ones, (the Imams), peace be upon them, have ordered a certain group of their followers not only to refrain and cease from demonstrating the truth, but also to veil and conceal it from the enemies of the religion, and to appear to them in such a way as to dispel their doubts during their disputation with them, since this was in their best interest; whereas they commanded another group of their followers to dispute with their opponents and divulge their true doctrine to them, and invite them to embrace the truth, since they knew that no harm would befall them.

Hence, dissimulation is obligatory in the cases we have put forward; whereas the obligation is removed in other cases, as we have demonstrated above.

Moreover, Abu Ja'far has summarized the subject matter, and has not discussed it in detail as we have done. Also, he convicts himself by what he has said on the subject; since he himself has omitted an obligatory act in this respect, and stands condemned by his own words. This is so because he has disclosed his doctrine and the truth in which he believes in his famous audiences and the discussions conducted there, which were well-publicized, and his compilations which enjoyed a wide circulation; yet he has not realized the contradiction between his words and deeds.

Then, had he discussed the matter fitting- ly as should have been done, and bridled his tongue in his discussions of these things, he would have been saved from self- contradiction; then the truth would have been made plain to those who seek the truth, and they would not have been con- fronted with difficulties, nor would doubts have obscured the meaning of the subject. But he did as the traditionists do in following the apparent meaning of the words, and abandoning critical methods. This is a view which vitiates the religion of him who holds it and prevents him from achieving fair- mindedness.

1. * * Not found in N.

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