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Obedience and God- Fearing

Humankind is a genuine element and distinctive being in this cosmos because of the numerous traits and donations that God has given exclusively to him so as to prefer him to the other creatures:

“We have honored the children of Adam, carried them on the land and the sea, given them pure sustenance and exalted them above most of My creatures. (17:70)”

God appointed human beings as His representatives on the earth and chosen some of them as messengers and prophets whose mission is to convey the codes as well as the principles that organize their lives. Unfortunately, most people are enslaved by illusive whims. They therefore go astray in the lurks of disobedience to God and lose their ways in the glooms of deviation. Afterwards, they suffer horrible sorts of puzzlement and misery. If they respond to the calls of obedience to God and follow the divine regulations, they will certainly win great happiness:

“Had the people of the towns believed (in Our revelations) and maintained piety, We would have certainly showered on them Our blessings from the sky and the earth. But they called Our revelations lies, thus Our torment struck them for their evil deeds. (7:96)”

Because of its submission to God and pursuance to His regulations, this cosmos is working so consistently, its elements are working evenly, and its system is being applied to the millions of generations.

Because they follow the will of God, the lives of all existents on this earth are prospering and settling straight.

People, likewise, are applying the directions of the inventors of the mechanical devices so that they can guarantee their maintenance. To gain treatment and cure, people submit to the prescriptions of physicians and suffer hardships of treatment.

Why does man, then, avoid acting obediently to his Creator Who has full awareness of the hidden, benefits, and disadvantages?

It is absolutely impossible for man to win his goals by any way other than that of the obedience to God and application of His regulations:

“One who obeys Allah and His Messenger will certainly achieve a great success. (33:71)”

“Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to the gardens wherein streams flow. Allah will make whoever turns away suffer a painful torment (48: 17).”

God has made the good of this world as well as the world to come contingent on fear of Him. He has made the dearest hopes dependent on it. Let us refer to some aspects, which God has made contingent on fear of Him:

(1) Love of God:

“God loves the pious ones. (9:4)”

(2) Escape from misfortunes and arrangement of the sustenance:

“God will make a way (out of difficulty) for one who has fear of Him and will provide him with sustenance in a way that he will not even notice. (65:3)

(3) Victory and support:

“God is certainly with the pious and the righteous ones. (16: 128)”

(4) Acceptance of deeds:

“Believers, have fear of Allah and speak righteous words. Allah will reform your deeds and forgive your sins. One who obeys Allah and His Messenger will certainly achieve a great success. (33:70-1)

(5) Good tidings at death:

“Those who have faith and fear God will receive glad news both in this life and in the life hereafter. The words of God do not change. This alone is the supreme triumph (10:63-4).”

(6) Salvation from Hell:

“We will save the pious ones from the hell fire and leave the unjust people therein in crowded groups. (19:72)”

(7) Eternity in Paradise:

“Paradise, vast as the heavens and the earth, is prepared for the pious (3: 133)”

From the previous, we conclude that God-fearing is a great treasure containing various sorts of worldly and religious expectations.

Reality of Obedience and God-Fearing

Obedience implies submission to God and carrying out His orders. God-fearing implies self-guard against that whichever will cause harm in the world to come:

Imam al-Hasan (a) said: “Work for your world as if you will live forever, and work for your life to come as if you will die tomorrow. If you seek power without the need for a clan and dignity without the need of authority, you should leave the humility of the disobedience to Allah to the honor of the obedience to Him.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “If you want to know whether you are good or not, you should test your heart; if it is inclined to the people of the obedience to Allah and detests the people of disobedience to Him, they you are good, and Allah loves you. But if it (i.e. your heart) hates the people of obedience to Allah and is inclined to the people of disobedience to Him, then you are empty of goodness and Allah hates you. Man, however, will be attached to the one he loves¹.”

“He who disobeys Allah does not know Him. You disobey the Lord and show his love. This is surely strange deed. If your love is sincere, you will obey Him. Certainly, the lover obeys the one he loves”

Al-Hasan Ibn Musa al-Wesha (of Baghdad) narrated: In Khurasan, I, once, was with Ali Ibn Musa ar-Ridha (a) while he was delivering a sermon in a session. Zaid Ibn Musa his brother was attendant, but he was addressing words of pride to a group of the attendants. As the Imam (a) heard Zaid's words, he turned to him and said: “Zaid, do you, because you have heard my wording in Kufa that Allah forbids Hell to consume the offspring of Fatima (a) since she preserved her chastity, take pride against others? By Allah I swear, my previous wording is peculiar to al-Hasan, al-Hussein, and the other direct descendants of Fatima (a). You are too humble, in the sight of Allah, to be regarded, on the Day of Resurrection, as same as Musa Ibn Ja'far Imam al-Kadhim (a); the father of Imam ar-Ridha and Zaid the addressee who used to spend his days with fasting and spend his night with worship to Allah while you act disobediently to Him. Ali Ibn al-Hussein Imam as-Sajjad (a) used to say, ‘One who belongs to us and does righteously will be rewarded twice as others, and one who belongs to us and acts evilly will be punished twice as others.’”

Imam ar-Ridha (a) then turned towards me and asked about the way we recite Allah's saying:

“His Lord replied, “He is not one of your family. He is a man of unrighteous deeds. Do not ask me about that which you have no knowledge. I advise you not to become an ignorant person.” (11:46)”

I answered that some people recite it in a way showing that son of Prophet Noah was illegitimate, while

others recite it in a way showing that he was his son, but he used to act wrongly².

The Imam (a) commented: “No, by Allah. That son was Noah’s. But Allah dismissed him from the family of Noah because he acted wrongly. In the same manner, he who belongs to us in family relations but does not obey Allah is not belonged to us. So long as you obey Allah, you are one of us the Ahlul-Bayt³.”

Jabir related that Imam al-Baqir (a) said to him:

“Jabir, do you think that it is sufficient for those who claim being Shia to say that they cherish us; the Prophet’s household?

By Allah I swear, our adherents Shia- are only those who fear and obey Allah. Hence, you should fear Allah and work for the cause of obtaining that which He has in possession. There is no relation between Allah and anybody. The most favorable and honorable servants of Allah are the most God- fearing and the most pious.

Jabir, the only means through which a servant seeks to gain Allah’s favor is the obedience to Him. We the Ahlul-Bayt – do not carry a patent for saving from Hell. Likewise, none of you has a claim against Allah. He who obeys Allah is only our disciple and whoever disobeys Him is our enemy. The loyalty to us cannot be gained except by means of diligent work and piety⁴.”

Al-Mufaddhal Ibn Omar narrated the following:

“I, once, was with Imam as-Sadiq (a) when our subject of discussion was good deeds. I said, ‘My deeds are very few,’ but the Imam shouted, ‘What is this saying? You should seek Allah’s forgiveness. To have few deeds with God-fearing is better than many deeds that lack it.’ I asked him about the meaning of his words, and he said, ‘A man may serve food (to the poor), act leniently with his neighbors, and receive the guests hospitably, but as soon as a door to a forbidden act is opened before him, he enters there. This is the big deed that lacks God-fearing. Another man may not have such good deeds, but he keeps himself away from plunging in forbidden acts when he faces some. This is the few deed with God-fearing⁵.”

¹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol 15 part 2 page 49 (as quoted from al-Kafi)

². To elucidate this point, we mention the following: Since the Arabic language depends on the vocalization of words, a change of a single vocality in a word may change the whole meaning and give a totally new one. Moreover, the Quran was written without the vocalization symbols on the letters; therefore, people had different views about definite Quranic words and expressions. This was exactly what happened in the Verse concerned. The word about which people differed is (a-m-l). Some people read it as (amalun). Accordingly, the Quranic text meant that that son was not Noah’s. Other people read it as (amileh), and, accordingly, the Quranic Verse meant that Noah’s son had acted unrighteously; therefore, he was not regarded as one of the family of Prophet Noah. However, the problem of numerous forms of reciting the holy Quran has no longer existed, because all the Islamic sects agree unanimously on a definite form of reciting every single word in the Quran, depending on basic principals and authentic traditions that are related to the Prophet (S), the Ahl ul-Bayt, and the most reliable companions and their followers (a).

- [3.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; (as quoted from Meaani al- Akhbar and Uyounu akhbar ir-Ridha).
- [4.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 60 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- [5.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 61 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

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