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Part 6: It is obligatory to obey the True Imams

Kulaini and others have with reliable chains of narrators, narrated from Imam Baqir (a.s.) that the loftiness of religious affairs, its greatness, its key and the door of all good affairs and the pleasure of the Merciful Allah is to obey the Imam after recognizing him. Then he said: Allah Almighty has said:

مَنْ يُطِعْ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا.

Whoever obeys the Apostle, he indeed obeys Allah, and whoever turns back, so We have not sent you as a keeper over them. (***Sura Nisa 4:80***)

Meaning: One who obeys the messenger has obeyed Allah and if one disobeys him then (it does not matter), O Messenger! We have not sent you as their watchman, (so that you may be responsible for his deeds, nor have you to take their account). Your only job is to convey Our commandments and the job of taking their accounts and to reward or punish them is Our job.1

According to reliable source Abu Sabah has narrated that I give witness that I have heard Imam Sadiq (a.s.) saying: Ali (a.s.) was the Imam whose obedience was made obligatory by Allah, and similarly Hasan, Husain and Ali bin Husain (a.s.) were the Imams whose obedience was made compulsory by Allah.

Also the same Imam Baqir (a.s.) is reported to have said that: We are same group of Imams whose obedience has been made obligatory by Allah for the people and you should follow those (Imams) for knowing whom is not impossible for the people.

The same gentleman is reported to have said that Imam Baqir (a.s.) has, explaining the Divine words about the descendants of Abraham (Aale Ibrahim), meaning:

وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا.

We have granted them a great kingdom… (***Sura Nisa 4:54***)

said the great kingdom means compulsory obedience. We have made their obedience a must for the entire creation and that the Holy Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) are included in Aale Ibrahim.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said to Abul Hasan Attar: Include the prophets and their legatees in the said obedience, that is, just as the obedience of the prophets is compulsory so is the obedience of their legatees (Awsiya).

Moreover, according to reliable sources, he is reported to have also said: We are the group whose obedience has been made obligatory for all by the Creator of the universe, and He has allotted booty (Anfal) to us, that is, the produce of all mountains and lands etc which has been mentioned at relevant places. And so also we are entitled to the war booty and that we are perfect in knowledge and steadfast and that our knowledge is certain and that we are the envied about whom Allah has said:

أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَاهُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ.

Are the people envious of what We have granted to them out of Our Grace? (***Sura Nisa:54***)

Likewise, it is reported by Husain bin Alaa that he said: I presented the beliefs of the Shias to Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that the obedience of legatees has been made obligatory by Allah. The Hazrat said: Yes, the legatees are the people about whom Allah has ordained:

Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority (Ulil Amr) among you. 4:54

After this, Allah willing, we would mention and explain that Ulil Amr means the Infallible Imams who are related to Imamate and the obedience of whose orders is obligatory and that only they are the persons about whom Allah has said:

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ.

Your Guardian is only Allah and His Messenger and those who establish Prayer and who pay Zakat while they are bowing. (***Sura Maida 5:55***)

All have agreed among Shias and Ahle Sunnat that none except Amirul Momineen (a.s.) has ever paid Zakat (sadaqah–alms) while bowing in Prayer and, according to some narrations, this giving of alms while bowing down (in Rukoo) is a clear reference to the holy Imams and the use of plural sign (those) is in support of it.

It is narrated according to reliable chains of narrators that a man from Fars asked Imam Ridha (a.s.): Is your obedience compulsory? He said: Yes. He asked: Is it obligatory as was the case with Amirul Momineen (a.s.). He replied: Yes.

Again, according to reliable sources, Abu Baseer has reported that he asked Imam Ridha (a.s.): Are all the Imams (a.s.) like one person in the matter of Imamate and is the obedience to them compulsory? Does the command apply to all of them? He replied: Yes.

Moreover, according to reliable chains of narrators, Kulaini and others have narrated from Muhammad bin Zaid Tabari that: I was standing behind Imam Ridha (a.s.) in Khorasan when a number of people of Bani Hashim were present including Ishaq bin Moosa bin Isa Abbasi.

The Hazrat asked him: I have heard that people say that we claim that people are our slaves because of our near relation with the Holy Prophet (S)? I have never said this nor have I heard it from any of our ancestors nor have I ever got news that anyone of our elders said so. But we do say that, in the matter of obedience people are our slaves meaning servants, that is, they are like slaves because it is compulsory for them to obey and thus all of them are our slaves in the affairs of Religion, that is, they have been freed from hellfire on account of obeying us. Hence it is incumbent on those who are present here to convey this to all those who are absent.

Kulaini has, according to reliable chains of narrators, narrated from Abi Salmah that he said: I have heard Imam Sadiq (a.s.) saying: We are the group whose obedience has been made a must for the creation by the Lord Almighty and people must recognize us (they cannot do without our recognition) and people are not helpless in knowing us and the one who knows us with our Imamate is a believer and the one who denies is a disbeliever and the one who neither knows us nor denies us is like a man of weak belief and misguided until he returns to our compulsory obedience, the obedience which has been made obligatory by Allah. If such a fellow dies in a condition of this misguidance, it is for the Almighty Allah either to punish him or to forgive him.

Also it has been reliably reported that people asked Imam Ridha (a.s.) about the best thing by which servants (human beings) can get nearer to Allah. He replied: The best way to get closer to Allah is to obey Allah and to obey the Messenger and to obey the Ulil Amr and Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: Our friendship is faith and our enmity (being our enemy) is disbelief.

Likewise, he reports through reliable sources that: I asked Imam Baqir (a.s.): I want to describe before you my religion through which I worship Allah. He said: Do describe. I submitted: I give witness that Allah is One and that Muhammad (S) is His messenger and I believe in all the things brought by the Holy

Prophet (S) from the Almighty Allah and I also accept (believe) that Ali (a.s.) was the Imam whose obedience was made obligatory by Allah and that after him was Imam Hasan (a.s.) who was such Imam and thereafter Imam Husain (a.s.) whose obedience was made compulsory by Allah and that after him was Imam Ali bin Husain (a.s.) whose obedience was a must according to Divine Command and thereafter I described the names of all the subsequent Imams until I mentioned his name and said that I accept his Imamate as a must. He said: Yes, this is the religion of Allah and the religion of the angels of Allah.2

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1. The writer says: This verse has been referred to because the Holy Prophet (S) had, on a number of occasions, ordered the people to obey the holy Imams and hence their obedience is the obedience of the prophet and the prophet's obedience is the obedience of Allah.
2. The writer says: By the "angels' religion" is meant that the angels also like this religion for the servants (human) of Allah. It is just as what is meant by religion of Allah is that the angels are bound to accept this belief as is understood from other traditions.

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