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Responsibility 67: Not Uprising

Another responsibility during the period of occultation is that we must not rise up in revolt or wage war against the people of falsehood, oppressive governments and super-powers of our time. During this era, we must seek to safeguard our faith and religion and must work for the betterment of ourselves in this life and the next and this is something which has been mentioned in numerous traditions.

This issue has been emphasized many times in the words of the Ahlul Bayt (as), and from the narrations we can deduce that to rise up and fight against the governments of our time is not correct and does not lead to the pleasure of the Ahlul Bayt (as).

In Sahifatul Sajjadiyah, it has been narrated from Imam 'Ali b. al-Husain as-Sajjad (as) that:

> مَا خَرَجَ وَ لاَ يَخْرُجُ مِنَّا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِلى قِيَامِ قَائِمِنَا أَحَدٌ لِيَدْفَعَ ظُلْماً أَوْ يَنْعَشَ حَقًّا إِلاَّ اصْطَلَمَتْهُ الْبَلِيَّةُ وَ كَانَ قِيَامُهُ زِيَادَةً فِي مَكْرُوهِنَا وَ شِيعَتِنَا

"None of us, the Ahlul Bayt (as), have risen or will rise until the advent of the Awaited Imam (ajtf), to repel oppression or revive the truth except that he shall definitely be overcome by misfortunes and his revolt shall result in more adversity of us and our Shi'ah."[1]

However supposing that this tradition or other traditions such as this (which are many) are all correct, and if we suppose that the chain of narrators are correct and there is no issue of taqiyyah (dissimulation) and that there is no other impediment in the traditions (which would prevent us from understanding them).

Then we understand that what has been prohibited in this and other traditions is not that we are not permitted to rise up against an oppressor or oppressive government, rather, it means that we are not permitted to fight against them with force and weapons and this is what has been prohibited.

From another point of view, the task of understanding the meaning of this tradition is not the job of just anyone. Rather, the responsibility of analyzing this (and other such) traditions and bringing forth its

correct understanding is the duty of the prominent ‘Ulama, Fuqaha and the learned ones who possess the ability to carry out this task.

In addition, it is possible that after extracting and understanding the truth of this type of tradition according to his understanding, a Mujtahid would act according to his grasp of knowledge of such a statement.

Indeed, we know that those who are not at the level of ijtihad (the ability to pass legal judgment on the laws of Islam) would be obliged to follow (perform taqlid of) the Mujtahid who fulfills all of the conditions of being followed. Thus, the layman’s obligation is merely to perform taqlid and not to simply follow the Qur’anic verses and Prophetic traditions.

Thus, if we agree with these types of traditions which tell us that it is not correct for us to rise up and fight against a government, then we cannot say that if a Mujtahid who fulfills all of the conditions of being followed was to rise up and fight against an oppressive government that we would leave him alone and not support him!

Rather, it is imperative upon the followers (muqallidin) to refer to the scholar’s fatawa and act according to what he has decreed! They must work together with him and provide the support needed and thus, they too must rise up if he says to!

In summary, it is correct to state that: The true believers must not rise up and fight against the governments of their time except if the Mujtahid who fulfills all of the conditions[2] for being followed gives a hukm (ruling) that it is obligatory to rise up and fight. In this instance, according to the proofs of the performance of taqlid, this uprising and revolt would be permissible and correct for the followers rather, it would be obligatory.

Therefore, from this responsibility, we are better able to understand that the people must not drift away from the path of taqlid of their Maraja’ (sources of emulation).

In the traditions, jurisprudential sources and references it has been mentioned that in certain instances, the act of jihad (fighting) can become obligatory and the ruling of this is based on the ruling (fatwa) and injunction (hukm) of a Mujtahid and this information can be seen in the ‘Section of Jihad’ which is in the books of Islamic jurisprudence where a complete and detailed discussion has been given.

1. as-Sahifat as-Sajjadiyah (Compiled by Faidhul Islam), pg. 22
2. Refer to the footnote in responsibility Thirteen.

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