

Home > Greater Sins Volume 3 > The Thirty-ninth Greater Sin: To Neglect any Obligatory Act > Denying the Rights of the Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.)

The Thirty-ninth Greater Sin: To Neglect any Obligatory Act

The thirty-ninth Greater Sin is to omit or not to perform any single obligatory religious duty which has been made obligatory. It is mentioned in the Sahifa of Abdul Azim which quotes traditions from Imam Jawad, Imam Ri'a, Imam Kadhim and Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that to forgo any act which is made incumbent upon us by Allah (S.w.T.) is a greater sin.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“One who omits Prayer intentionally has indeed gone out of the refuge (beyond the pale) of Allah (S.w.T.) and His Messenger (S)”.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says that neglecting a divine command is infidelity as mentioned in the following words of the Almighty,

“Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world and on the day of resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement and Allah is not at all heedless of what you do.” (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 85)

Imam (a.s.) said,

“Allah has considered as infidels those who neglect His commands. He refers to them as believers but does not accept their belief and did not consider it beneficial for them. Rather He says that their recompense in this world is disgrace and in the Hereafter is a terrible punishment.”

In addition to this Imam (a.s.) also said,

“The Almighty shall not cast a glance of Mercy upon one who leaves a Wajib duty or commits a greater sin. And He shall not cleanse him of his sins.”

The narrator asked in surprise, “Does Allah (really) not look at this person with mercy?”

Imam (a.s.) replied,

“This is because he has become a polytheist assigning a partner.”

“Did he (really) become a polytheists?” asked the narrator in astonishment.

Imam (a.s.) continued,

“This is because Allah has issued a command and Shaitan had issued another (that is Shaitan Commanded not to do what Allah had ordered). This person neglected Allah’s command and accepted the order of Shaitan (that is he left a Wajib and performed a Harām act)

Thus this person shall abide in the seventh layer where abide the hypocrites of Hell with Shaitan because he had obeyed the latter.”¹

The words of Imam (a.s.) imply that polytheism here denotes polytheism in obedience as mentioned previously in the discussion of Polytheism.

Corruption and a Terrible chastisement

The Qur’anic ayats that have warned against opposition to Divine commands and decreed punishment for the same includes the ayat of Surah an-Nūr:

“...therefore let those beware who go against His order lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement.” (Surah an-Nūr 24: 63)

According to commentators of Qur’an the word, “trial” denotes worldly afflictions and “painful chastisement” as associated with the Hereafter. It is also possible that both of them signify both types of afflictions, worldly as well as in the Hereafter. Many traditions emphasize the absolute necessity of fulfilling obligatory religious duties. One such tradition is as follows:

The Messenger of Allah (S) states,

“On the night of Miraj Allah the Almighty said,

“No slave can gain proximity to Me without fulfilling the duties that I made incumbent on him?”²

The Holy Prophet (S) also says,

“Act upon the obligatory acts so that you become the most pious among men.”³

What are Wajibat (Obligatory Acts)?

Any action that is commanded by Allah (S.w.T.), the performance of which carries rewards and its neglect is assured punishment is a Wajib. There are many Wajibat of the Almighty but the most important of them on which is based the foundation of Islam are five: Prayer, Fast, Hajj, Zakat and Wilayat, Some traditions refer to these as the pillars of faith and the codes of Islam. The compiler of Wasa'il ul-Shia has mentioned some of these traditions and then remarked, "Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar is a form of Jihad and Jihad comes under Wilayat."

As indicated in the traditions since Khums is the substitute for the rights of Sadat, it is a part of Wilayat too. In this way the pillars of faith or the branches of religion number ten:

1. Prayer
2. Fast
3. Hajj
4. Zakat
5. Khums
6. Jihad
7. Amr bil Ma'ruf
8. Nahy Anil Munkar
9. Tawalla
10. Tabarra.

Fasting in the Month of Ramadhan

Accepting the obligatory nature of fasting during the month of Ramadhan is one of necessities of faith. One who denies this is a renegade liable for capital punishment. If one neglects its knowingly and intentionally without any valid excuse though he does not deny its obligatory nature, he should be punished with 25 lashes or as prescribed by the religious law. If he repeats the crime he should be punished again. The third time he should be executed.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

"One who eats during day of Ramadhan (without any excuse) the spirit of faith exits from him."4

It is recorded in the *Mausiqā* of Sama that a man broke his fast in Ramadhan without a valid excuse. He did this Three times. When he was brought to the Imam (a.s.) the third time, the Imam (a.s.) ordered that he should be executed.

Jihad in the way of Allah (S.w.T.)

Jihad is also considered a part of faith like Prayer and Fasting as clearly mentioned in traditions. Numerous ayats and traditions extol its virtues and warn about the chastisement in case one neglects it. Jihad can be of various kinds.

First Type: To fight the infidels in propagation of Islam. There are many conditions for this type of Jihad, one of them being the permission of Imam (a.s.) or that of his special representative. Since in our period the Imam (a.s.) is in Ghaibat (Occultation) and there is no special representative also, we are exempted from the first type of Jihad.

Second Type: To fight the infidels who have attacked Muslims in order to destroy Islam and its relics. The permission of Imam or his representative is not necessary in this case. It is a *Wajib al-Kifai*, obligatory on everyone, but if performed by some people the others are exempted. Everyone who is capable of fighting, even women must do Jihad to defend the boundaries of Muslim areas and to dispel the mischief of infidels.

Third Type: To fight the infidels who have attacked Muslims in order to slay them or rob them of their property. It is immaterial whether they intend to convert to their faith or not, or to destroy Islam or not. For this situation also the permission of Imam or his representative is not required. Jihad in defence of ones life, property or honour is *Wajib* upon every Muslim. One should of course have the capability of fighting the intruders and should be reasonably safe from perils in doing so. While protecting himself and others he must be steadfast in fulfilling all conditions of Jihad. Detailed laws regarding this subject are given in the books of Islamic Laws.

The Late Kashiful Ghita says in his book, *The Shiah origin and faith*, that, "Jihad is one of the most important foundations of Islam and the real pillars of its edifice. It is Jihad which has erected the palace of Islam and made it lofty. Had it not been for Jihad, Islam would have not been the source of salvation and the means of grace and blessings that it is (page 160).

Jihad is the well-being of life and preservation of property and a way to sacrifice oneself for Allah (S.w.T.). Through this is achieved superiority over the enemies. It honours Islam and clears the earth of injustice and destruction.

Besides Jihad against the enemies of Islam, there is another Jihad known as *Jihad al-Akbar*, which is Jihad against ones own self. This Jihad is directed against the maladies of the soul like ignorance, injustice, oppression, pride and arrogance, vanity, jealousy, niggardliness etc. In this struggle a person

has to overcome his ignorance and fight against his own feelings of injustice to curb these evils or overcome them altogether. This is not at all easy. These undesirable traits are second nature to the person, and form an inherent part of his mental make up. It takes a tremendous effort, just to control these feelings, let alone getting rid of them. Therefore fighting against ones own weaknesses, failings and shortcomings has been termed Jihad al-Akbar by the Messenger of Allah (S). A statement says,

“Your greatest enemy is your self which is between your two sides.”

Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar

Amr bil Ma'ruf denotes urging others to perform good deeds and Nahy Anil Munkar implies restraining them from sins. Like the previous obligations these are also an article of faith and an important duty incumbent on Muslims. They are components of Jihad. Its practice is greatly emphasized in many ayats and traditions and its neglect is severely criticised. Some of the ayats are mentioned below.

“And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and these it is that shall be successful.” (Surah Ali- ‘Imran 3: 104)

In this ayat Allah (S.w.T.) has informed us the obligatory nature of Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar with emphasis. At another place in the same chapter the Lord Almighty remarks,

“You are the best of the nations raised up for (the benefit of) men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah;” (Surah Ali- ‘Imran 3:110)

Those who neglect Nahy Anil Munkar have been severely criticised in the following verse of Surah al-Ma'ida,

“Why do not the learned men and the doctors of law prohibit them from their speaking of what is sinful and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired? Certainly evil is that which they work.” (Surah al-Ma'ida 5:63)

In the story of the People of Sabt, Allah the High and Mighty says,

“And ask them about the town which stood by the sea; when they exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath, appearing on the surface of the water, and on the day on which they did not keep the Sabbath they did not come to them; thus did We try them because they transgressed. And when a party of them said: Why do you admonish a people whom Allah would destroy or whom He would chastise with a severe chastisement? They said: To be free from blame before your Lord, and that haply they may guard (against evil). So when they neglected what they had been reminded of, We delivered those who forbade evil and We overtook those who were unjust with an evil chastisement because they transgressed. Therefore when they revoltingly persisted in what they had been forbidden, We

said to them: Be (as) apes, despised and hated.” (Surah al-Arʿaf 7: 163–166)

It is clear from these ayats that Amr Bil Maʿrūf and Nahy Anil Munkar are obligatory duties which if not fulfilled, invite divine chastisement. Those who neglect Nahy Anil Munkar are as guilty as those who commit sins and deserve equal punishment.

“Those who disbelieved from among the children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of Dawūd and Isa, son of Marium, this was because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limit. They used not to forbid each other the hateful things (which) they did; certainly evil was that which they did.” (Surah al-Mʿida 5: 78–79)

This ayat has severely criticized those who neglect Nahy Anil Munkar. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says that the people who earned the curse of Allah’s messengers because they did not forbid evil and who were subsequently transformed into apes were those who never befriended the wrong doers or attend their assemblies, but when met those people they were friendly and affectionate towards them.⁵

Amr bil Maʿrūf and Nahy Anil Munkar in Traditions

Imam Riḍā (a.s.) said,

“You must practice Amr bil Maʿrūf and Nahy Anil Munkar because if you do not, you will be ruled upon by evil people and after that if the righteous ones among you will supplicate, their supplications shall not be granted.”⁶

The Late Ayatullah Kashiful Ghita has explained in his book the Shiah Origin and Faith:

“Amr bil Maʿrūf and Nahy Anil Munkar are a part of the most important and sublime commands of Islam about whose necessity reason as well as religion are unanimous.

These two great functions are considered to be the most fundamental bases of Islam. They range from the best prayers and worship to one of the different kinds of Jihad. If any nation ignores these two fundamentals, Almighty Allah certainly subjects them to degradation and misfortunes. Such communities readily fall a prey to the human looking rapacious animals and tyrants and unjust men.”

It is for this reason that the Prophet of Islam and our infallible Imams have been quoted to have spoken in moving words regarding the necessity of discharging these two great duties and the mischief and harm caused to human society by their abandonment, the very thought of which makes one shiver.

Unfortunately, today we see openly with our own eyes the mischief and harm which originate from laziness in the performance of these two functions. However, we wish that this process should have ended here and we might have remained content with the abandonment of these two functions and things should not have come to such a pass that permissible should have become impermissible and

vice versa so much so that those who invite others to truth and excellence should themselves recalcitrate against truth and those who prohibit others from doing bad deeds should themselves be involved in various kinds of unlawful matters. This is an onerous and unbearable calamity. As a result of bad deeds of the people, mischief has become patent everywhere. And all this is in spite of the fact that we have been told: “Accursed are those who invite others to goodness and forsake it themselves and also those who prohibit others from committing sins but commit sins themselves!”

Truly, Islam deserves to be praised for its laws as well as for the extent and comprehensiveness of its commands, because it foresaw all that, which is necessary for the spiritual and material life of man as well as the source of his advancement and prosperity.

On the one hand, it has formulated comprehensive and potent laws for mankind and this in fact amounts to authority for legislation. As is evident, authority for legislation cannot bring the desired results without the necessary power to enforce it. Hence in the first instance all Muslims have been made responsible to guarantee its enforcement and it has been declared that it is the duty of every individual to enjoin others to do good things and to forbid them from doing bad things so that everyone of them may become the enforcing authority for the relevant rules and regulations. All should supervise the actions of one another and all should be answerable to one another. However, as it is possible that in certain circumstances this guarantee for enforcement may not suffice and some person may hold back from putting the laws in action, extensive powers have been given in the second stage to the Islamic State and its ruler and the person absolutely responsible for the affairs of Muslim society, viz. the Imam or person nominated by him for the purpose.

Islamic regime is responsible to enforce the penal laws of Islam, punish the offenders, campaign against corruption, injustice and mischief and make efforts to safeguard the independence of Muslims and strengthen the frontiers of the country.

In short the benefits and vital effects of these two great Islamic Commands (to enjoin others to do good and to refrain from evil) are too numerous to be narrated. Is it possible to find such sublime social policies in any other religion of the world? Is there any school of thought or philosophy more profound than this wherein all individuals supervise the conduct of others in Three things viz. (i) to learn and act upon it; (ii) to educate others and (iii) to persuade others to learn and act, should be compulsory for every one?

The Messenger of Allah (S) also says,

“Indeed Allah is furious with the weak believer who has no religion.”

Some inquired who that weak believer was? He (S) replied,

“The feeble one who sees evil but does not try to prevent it.”⁷

The Prophet of Allah (S) says,

“When my Ummah neglects Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar it should expect divine chastisement to befall them.”⁸

Imam Baqir (a.s.) said,

“The Almighty Allah revealed on Shuaib (a.s.):

‘I shall destroy a hundred thousand people from your nation. Forty thousand of whom are sinners and sixty thousand righteous.’

‘O my Lord! The sinners are liable for punishment but why the righteous ones?’ asked Shuaib (a.s.).

Allah replied, ‘Because they used to socialize with the sinners and in spite of My dislike they never disliked the sinners. They never restrained them from sins.’⁹

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says:

“Wael (Hell/terrible punishment) is for the people who neglect Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar.”¹⁰

Amir ul-Mu’minīn ‘Ali (a.s.) says,

“Indeed the Almighty has cursed those who came before you for neglecting Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar. Thus there is curse upon the ignorant sinners and the intelligent people who neglect Nahy Anil Munkar.”

(Nahjul Balagha)

Rules Regarding Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar

Under the following four conditions, Amr bil Ma’rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar is obligatory.

(1) Knowledge of Good and Evil: One who is supposed to command others for a particular act must himself be certain that it is Wajib. That is, it should be an article of faith or a matter upon which there is unanimity among scholars. It is not Wajib to order something regarding which there is difference of opinion, because it is possible that the Mujtahid whom the person is following may not have made it Wajib. Similarly when it is possible that the person who is not observing a Wajib may have some valid (legal or rational) excuse, it is not Wajib to enjoin upon him. In the same way the thing that one intends to prohibit must be absolutely Harām. For example if one sees a Muslim back-biting but surmises that it was permissible in that particular circumstance, he is not obliged to prohibit it. Also if doing so could cause him disgrace he must not venture ahead. In short, one must have certainty regarding the ‘goodness’ of something one intends to enjoin and the certainty regarding the ‘evil’ of something one intends to forbid. In both the cases he must also be aware of the special circumstances at the time of

putting the commands into practice.

(2) There should be a strong possibility that if he acts on Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar it would prove beneficial. If he feels it is not going to make any difference he is not obliged to act upon them. Musada says that I inquired from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) regarding the Prophetic saying which stated that the greatest Jihad is to speak up against the unjust ruler. Imam (a.s.) said, "This is possible when the ruler is aware of his ruling being wrong and is prepared to heed your advice, or else leave it"

(3) Hazrat Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says that Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar should be for a believer who is prepared to accept the advice and benefit from it. Or it should be for the uninformed person who is eager to learn about it. It is not necessary to enjoin good or forbid evil to a person who is powerful and can hurt or harm you. It is not necessary to enjoin good and forbid evil to a person who has been sinful, continually neglecting *Wajib* acts and repeated performing *Harām* acts, but who has repented and given up his sinful ways. Some scholars say that it is not necessary to enjoin good or forbid evil to a person who has shown regret for his sinful ways, even if one is unaware of his intentions to give up *Harām* acts and perform the *Wajib* acts.

Practicing Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar is not necessary if it can lead to any harm or loss. If there is risk to one's life or the life, honour or property of a Muslim, the duty is no longer valid.

However, the tradition which says that, "The greatest martyr is one who speaks the truth before an unjust person and he kills him," is about the circumstance when initially there was no danger or harm or mischief. But when a person says the truth he is slain.

One should not worry about minor discomfort and must not act on doubt

There are some traditions that criticize those who forgo Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar at the slightest possibility of harm. In a detailed tradition from Imam Baqir (a.s.) Jabir mentions the characteristics of stupid and riyakar (those who show off) people who will not consider Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar *Wajib* except when they are absolutely safe from harm. They will present various excuses to exempt themselves from the duties of Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar.¹¹

Imam (a.s.) further said,

"They will practice Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar only for the deeds that do not cause them monetary or physical harm, like Prayer, and Fasting, and if there is a chance of harm from this also they will give it up." Thus they neglect an important divine obligation if there is a possibility of harm to themselves.

Such traditions probably refer to those people who expect to be harmed without having any good reason

for thinking so, or to situations where the disadvantage that may be caused is so insignificant that it can be ignored or to situations where some benefits are lost. In all such cases people who avoid Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar have neglected a divine obligation due to the weakness of their faith and are denounced in the traditions.

As mentioned earlier, one is exempted from this obligation only if it can result in serious harm.

Priorities in Practising Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy Anil Munkar

If fulfilling these duties is beneficial to the other person and harmful to oneself, one should use one's discretion. We shall judge the degree of benefit against the harm caused to ourselves and act accordingly.

Grades of Nahy Anil Munkar

There are Three grades of Nahy Anil Munkar: Forbidding evil by heart, tongue and hands. These Three are further divided into different grades and it is Wajib to take them into consideration. When an easy method will suffice it is not permitted to use severe means.

1. Forbidding by ones heart (Dislike)

Faith (Imān) requires that we should despise every prohibited (Harām) thing. Whenever we witness a Harām act we should express our dislike. We should turn away our face and be angry with the one who has performed it. We should stop speaking to him. If we are compelled to speak, we must speak with our face turned away from him. Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says,

“The Messenger of Allah (S) ordered us to meet the sinful people frowning.”¹²

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“The Almighty Allah sent some angels to destroy the people of a particular town. When the angels reached there, they found a worshiper engrossed in worship. The angels said, “O our Lord! Your particular slave is busy in worship, how can we send punishment on this town? The reply came, ‘Do not care about this man because he has never been angry for Our sake and never behaved curtly with the sinners.’”¹³

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reprimanded some of his followers for neglecting Nahy Anil Munkar. They said, “Though we try to restrain them, they do not pay heed.”

Imam (a.s.) told them that the Messenger of Allah (S) has said,

“Avoid their company and do not participate in their assemblies.”¹⁴

Imam (a.s.) has also said,

“Tell the evil doers and sinners: Either keep away from us or stop doing evil. If he does not obey, avoid him and keep away from him.”

If the first stage is effective we must not act on the next stage. Even in the first stage if a lenient method is effective we must not employ strict methods. For example we must prefer frowning over turning the face, and turning the face over social boycott. The method to be adopted may also differ from person to person. Some may respond better to soft criticism than to severe criticism. So the method most suitable for a particular case should be employed.

2.Refraining by Tongue

In this grade also it is advisable to employ kind words or mild criticism rather than resort to scathing denouncement. The Almighty Allah (S.w.T.) told Hazrat Mūsā (a.s.):

“Then speak to him a gentle word haply he may mind or fear.” (Surah Tā H 20: 44)

The softness or severity of the tone must be considered too.

3.Refraining by Hand (Force)

When refraining by tongue is also not effective we must employ force, either by fighting or by punishment. If a little beating is not enough there is no harm in giving a severe beating. If one is sure that the person is committing a great sin (like adultery or sodomy) and by giving him a severe beating he will be injured and mend his ways, it is Wajib to mete out this punishment.

Finally when none of the methods prove effective we are exempted from the duty of Nahy Anil Munkar.

A Corpse among the Living

Amir ul-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.) says:

Some believers perform Nahy Anil Munkar with heart, tongue and hands. These people possess good qualities from every aspect. While some do Nahy Anil Munkar with heart and tongue. They have two good qualities and lack the third one. Others perform Nahy Anil Munkar only with their hearts and have only one good quality. They are deprived of the two higher qualities. But the person who has none of these Three qualities is like a corpse amongst the living. In comparison to Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar other good deeds and Jihad in the way of Allah is like a drop of water in comparison to the sea. By performing Amr bil Ma'rūf and Nahy Anil Munkar someone's death does not come near and neither is there any reduction in sustenance. 15

Tawalla and Tabarra

It is obligatory on us to cultivate the love of Allah (S.w.T.) and affection for those who love Allah (S.w.T.) (or whom Allah (S.w.T.) loves). At the head of this list are our fourteen Ma'sūmīn (a.s.), then come their Shias and those who love them, their righteous children and due to their relationships the Sadīqs and Sayyids. Their love and affection is the recompense for the Messengership of the Holy Prophet (S) according to the Holy Qur'an:

“Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives...” (Surah Ash-Shūrā 42: 23)

Tabarra or Barā'at means to consider the enemies of Allah (S.w.T.) and the friends of the enemies of Allah (S.w.T.) as our enemies. The persons heading this list are those who have usurped the rights of ʿAlī Muhammad (a.s.), and those who had oppressed and troubled them. It denotes harbouring enmity towards all those whom Allah (S.w.T.) and the Holy Prophet (S) consider enemies. A large number of ayats and traditions mention the significance of these two duties and they are among the necessities of faith. A few of these are presented below.

“The foundation of Islam rests on five things: Prayer, Fast, Zakat, Hajj and Wilāyat. Among them none have been emphasized more than Wilāyat.”¹⁶

In another tradition it is mentioned,

“Love for Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.), enmity towards their enemies, Obedience of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) and following their guidance is included among the foundations of religion.”¹⁷

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says that the Messenger of Allah (S) asked his companions about the strongest relationship of belief (that will bring salvation and good consequences for the one who acts upon it)? “Allah and His Messenger (S) know better,” replied the companions. Some of them said, ‘Prayer’, some ‘Fast’, some guessed ‘Zakat’ a few thought it was Hajj and Umrah and some even thought it was Jihad. The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

“All the things mentioned by you are virtuous but they are not reliable channels of intercession (wasila). The best and the strongest channel is to have friendship for the sake of Allah and to harbour enmity for the pleasure of Allah. Loving the friends of Allah and expressing dislike for the enemies of Allah.”¹⁸

Imam Riḍā (a.s.) writes in a letter about the commandments of Islam and says, “Dissociation with those who have oppressed the Progeny of the Prophet (S) is Wajib. It is also obligatory against those who confronted ‘Ali (a.s.) in the battles of Jamal, Siffīn and Nahrawan, and those who deny his mastership (Wilāyat). It is Wajib to despise them all from the first to the last.”

Obligatory (for you) is the love of ‘Ali (a.s.) and those who followed him like, Salman, Abu Zar, Miqdad,

Ammar, Abul Haytham, Sahal bin Hunaif, Ubadah bin al-Samit, Abu Ayyub Ansari, Khuzayma bin Thabit, Abu Sa'ad Khudri etc. And also obligatory is the love of those who were like them.”¹⁹

One who desires to meet Allah (S.w.T.) with correct belief, must love Allah (S.w.T.), the Messenger of Allah and the believers (foremost among them being the twelve Imams), and he must harbour enmity with their opponents.”²⁰

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) says:

“By Allah! Even if a stone befriends us, Allah will raise it with us (in Qiyama). Is religion anything except friendship and hatred?”²¹

Denying the Rights of the Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.)

In Wasa'il ul-Shia, in the Chapter of 'Ta'at' we find a tradition of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) which mentions that denying the rights of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) is also a Greater sin. In another hadith Imam (a.s.) says,

“Denying whatever Allah has revealed.”

Rights of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) clearly means the Wilayat of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.). Thus denying whatever Allah (S.w.T.) has revealed means denying the Wilayat and rights of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.). According to some scholars it implies “warring against the friends of Allah (S.w.T.),” which is a Greater sin according to other traditions. This also means opposing the Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) and being hostile to them.

In other words, the traditions mentioned earlier are speaking of Wilayat.

Further research indicates that Wilayat of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) means to consider them 'Ali' l-'Amr' (holders of authority). Belief in Imamate is a confirmed article of faith. One who denies it goes beyond the pale of belief. In the same way walayat (with an 'a' as the second letter) denotes love and help of Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.). It is one of the necessities of religion. One who denies it, is like the Nasibis, outside the pale of Islam and ritually dirty (Najis).

“Whatever Allah has revealed”, clearly means all those things that the Almighty has sent down to us and whatever Allah (S.w.T.) has revealed must be accepted. If a person denies even a single thing he would be committing a greater sin. Since the most important thing sent by Allah (S.w.T.) and the most emphasized article of faith is Wilayat, its denial is the most serious of greater sins. As already mentioned, some of its forms (like bearing enmity to Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.)) absolutely makes one a Kafir.

As far as fighting the friends of Allah (S.w.T.) is concerned, anyone who bears enmity to them knowing that they are the loved ones of Allah (S.w.T.), has committed a greater sin. Since Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s.) are the foremost among friends of Allah (S.w.T.), their enmity and opposition and fighting them is the most serious form of infidelity. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says,

“On the day of Qiyāma the announcer will announce: Where are those who opposed and confronted our friends? Some people without flesh on their faces will stand up. It will be said: They are the ones who pained the believers, opposed them, were inimical to them and harmed their religion. Command will be issued to cast them into Hell.”²²

The Almighty Allah said to the Holy Prophet (S) in Miraj:

“O Muhammad (S)! Whoever insults one of My friends has certainly launched an attack on Me. And whoever makes war on Me, I make war with him.”

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

“My Lord! Who is Your friend? Although I have understood that You will fight those who fight You.”

The Almighty said,

“Those from whom I have taken the covenant of Wilāyat for you, and for your wasi (‘Ali a.s.), and your progeny (and that of ‘Ali (a.s.).”²³

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1. Wasa'il ul-Shia, Vol. 1 page 25
 2. al-Kāfi Vol. 2, page 82
 3. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 83
 4. Faqih Vol. 2 page 118
 5. Wasa'il ul-Shia
 6. Wasa'il ul-Shia
 7. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 393
 8. Wasa'il ul-Shia
 9. Wasa'il ul-Shia
 10. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11, page 397
 11. al-Kāfi Vol. 5 page 55
 12. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 413
 13. Wasa'il ul-Shia
 14. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 415
 15. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 11 page 404
 16. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 18
 17. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 18
 18. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 125
 19. Uyun al-Akhbar ar-Riwa page 268
 20. Rawdatul Kāfi
 21. Bihār al-Anwār
 22. al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 351
 23. al-Kāfi. Vol. 2 page 353

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