

The Necessity of Following the Orders of the Supreme Leader

Question: Is it Obligatory to Follow the Orders of the Supreme Leader?

First off, we must mention the following point that: An issue which is tied to the management of the affairs of the society – for the Prophet (SAWW), the infallible Imam (AS) and also for the Jurist – is related to the discussion of the ‘wilayat tashrii’ or the ‘legislative authority’. This is what is referred to in the verse of the Qur’an which reads:

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ...

“The Prophet has a greater authority over the believers than they have over their own selves.” ¹

In addition, there is a hadith which states:

مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ.

“Whosoever I am his master, this Ali is also his master (and authority).”

At this juncture, this verse and hadith form the basis of our discussion.

Therefore, the ‘legislative authority’ refers to the ‘judicial authority’. This means that a person can and has the right to, through the establishment and formation of laws and their implementation, intervene in

the lives of the people and the society while others are obliged to submit to such an individual and follow his laws.

The meaning of:

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ...

“The Prophet has a greater authority over the believers than they have over their own selves.”²

is that when the Prophet (SAWW) decides on an issue for an individual Muslim or for the entire Islamic society, it is obligatory to follow that decision. In addition, any resolution which the people would make in relation to themselves or the entire society would be superseded by the decision of the Prophet (SAWW)!

In other words, the society is in need of one powerful point of reference for which, in the face of societal issues, this focal-point would have the right and power to speak the final word and in the verse of the Qur`an quoted above, Allah (SWT) has clearly identified the central point on the pyramid of authority.

Therefore, the ‘Guardianship of the Jurist’ is not in the meaning of the mere guardianship over the mental challenged or simple minded people [since such individuals do not have ability to maintain themselves and conduct their own lives, they are in need of an authority and assistant].

Rather, it is our belief that the Jurist has the right of possession (of the property of others); right of formulating religious laws and societal regulations; passing rulings and the execution of the laws in relation to the administration of the affairs of the society and the societal issues. Therefore, we must place him ahead of all others while all other people are bound with the responsibility of observing this right and obeying his decisions, commands and laws.

It is for this reason that we state that according to the verse:

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ...

“The Prophet has a greater authority over the believers than they have over their own selves.”³

if the Prophet (SAWW) was to order a person to go to the battlefield and even if that person did not want to go, he would be obliged to obey the order of the Prophet (SAWW)!

Or if, for example, a person had given his khums (20% savings tax) and zakat (various religious tithes which have been explained in the detailed books of Islamic jurisprudence) and had no other compulsory

financial obligations resting upon him, however if the Prophet (SAWW) was to order him to give a certain amount of money towards the war [or any other cause], then that person would be obligated to give that money! He would not have the right to object since his (the Prophet's (SAWW) ruling is as the ruling of Allah (SWT) and as we know, when it comes to the rule of Allah (SWT), there are no ifs, ands or buts!

The late Imam Khumayni (RA) had given the following example in his lessons on many occasions that:

“If the Islamic authority was to tell me to give my Aba (cloak), then I must give it to him. When the best interest of the Islamic society would have demanded it, the Jurist who is in authority must have discerned that he had a need for my Aba and thus, if he was to ask me for it, I would be obliged to obey him and hand it over.”

This is the true meaning of the ‘Governance of the Jurist’ which has matured and set into our culture.

Until recent, there were no doubts in regards to this issue. Indeed, every single man and woman – young and old – villager or city dweller – knew this definition and accepted it.

In addition, there are also various proofs in regards to this authority, of which the most well-known is the ‘Tobacco ruling’ case and the verdict (hukm) which was laid down by the late Mirza Shirazi.

During the era of Mirza Shirazi, all of the Shia firmly believed that the Ulama and the Mujtahidin were sitting in the seat of authority which ultimately belongs to Imam al-Zaman (AS). Thus, if the one in the place of the Imam (AS) was to order something, his commands would be obeyed.

It is for this reason that when the late Mirza Shirazi stated that:

اليوم استعمال تنباكو حرام و مخالفت با امام زمان (عليه السلام) است.

“From today, the use of tobacco is forbidden (haram) and is akin to going against Imam al-Zaman (peace be upon him).”

all of the hookah machines were destroyed! Even the wife of Nasir al-Din Shah (the ruler of Iran at that time) took the hookah pipe and threw it, breaking it!

It did not come into anyone's mind at how it was possible that tobacco usage, which up until the day before this ruling was issued was permissible and was not problematic was now forbidden!? Is it possible for the permissible (halal) and impermissible (haram) of Allah (SWT) to change like this??

Rather, everyone – including the scholars, Maraja and those who had the right to issue legal rulings (fatawa) all realized that they were bound by the ruling and that they had to follow the verdict of Mirza Shirazi!

In any case, when the principle of the 'Governance of the Jurist' is proven using the logical and narrated proofs, then without doubt, the next rational step is complete obedience of (the one who is in) that position.

For more information on this, refer to:

1. *The Governance of the Jurist: The Governance of the Jurisprudence and Justice* by Ayatullah Abdullah Jawadi Amuli
2. *A Glance at the Theory of the Governance of the Jurist* Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi
3. *Naqd Quarterly Journal*, Issue 7

1. Suratul Ahzab (33), Verse 6

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/shore-contemplation-vol1-wilayatul-faqih-akbar-asad-ali-zadeh/necessity-follower-orders-supreme>