

Striving to remain firm on guidance

Allah the Almighty says:

And most surely I am most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good, then continues to follow the true guidance. Qur'an, 20:82

This holy verse shows that repentance, faith, and good deeds are not enough for the forgiveness of Allah and His contentment cannot be acquired except by following the true guidance.

It has been mentioned that Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Surely Allah does not forgive, except one who repents, believes, does good and is guided through the guardianship of us, the Ahlul Bayt.

By this, it is understood that guidance and being guided are two synonymous lines that each completes the other, but guidance is a divine favor that Allah endows His creatures with. Surely, His guidance has included all His servants with no exception. Allah says:

And the soul and Him Who made it perfect. Then, He inspired it to understand what is right and what is wrong. Qur'an, 91:7-8

Surely, We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful. Qur'an, 76:3

As for being guided, it is a personal effort that man exerts according to the general guidance to arrive after searching and trying to rely on his mental faculties, in distinguishing the truth from the untruth. And then chooses willingly the path of the truth after having been away from it. What explains this meaning is this saying of Allah:

...therefore, give good news to My servants, who listen to the word, and then follow the best of it; they are those whom Allah has guided, and those it is who are the men of understanding. Qur'an, 39:17-18

The meaning of the verse is that a reasonable servant opens his ears for arguments and listens to all

sayings and theories. He distinguishes the good from the bad, and then chooses to follow the truth and avoid the untruth. Such a servant returns to the original divine guidance willingly and so he deserves the praising of Allah to him that he is from the men of understanding.

The clearest example on the explanation of “guidance” and “being guided” is what has happened and is happening to the nation of Muhammad (S) whom Allah guided through the Prophet (S) and took them out of darkness into light and guided them to walk in His right path. He left them at the luminous destination after He had perfected to them their religion, completed His favor to them, and chosen for them Islam as a religion. 1

However, the nation separated, disagreed and divided after the Prophet (S) departed, into different groups, sects and creeds after it had been the best nation raised up for mankind.

The first reason behind this separation and disagreement belonged to the first companions who carried the banner of the Mission to deliver it to the next generations that followed. They disagreed and separated after the demise of their Prophet (S). They fought and killed each other. They considered each other as unbelievers and were free from each other.

The next generations followed them in that and made the problem more complicated. They widened the circle of disagreement with new thoughts and strange theories they attached to the religion of Allah. Therefore, sects and creeds came out and different groups disputed and fought each other. Muslims became confused in darkness that they did not know where to go and where the truth was, for every group claimed they had kept to the Qur'an and the Sunna, every creed claimed that they followed the Prophet's line, and every party was pleased with what it had.

If we leave aside our emotions, give up blind following, turn our backs to fanaticism, look at things with the eye of insight and ask – where is the position of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) among all these sects and creeds? This is especially so when we face the Prophet's traditions which order the nation to refer to the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in all religious and worldly affairs to assure guidance and protection from deviation. These traditions are true and reliable in all sects of Muslims. One of these traditions is the tradition of *Thaqalayn* where the Prophet (S) said:

I have left among you the Two Weighty Things; the Book of Allah and my progeny, my family. If you keep to them, you shall never go astray after me at all. I recommend you to obey Allah through obeying my family.

He repeated this three times.

One, who studies the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and their position to the nation today, does not find but respect and reverence to them among all Muslims, but the will of the Messenger of Allah (S) was not limited to respect and reverence to the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). He ordered the nation to obey, follow and imitate them in everything. He said:

Do not precede them lest you perish, do not lag behind them lest you perish and do not teach them, because they are more knowledgeable than you.

If it is so, we do not find today any group except one that does according to the will of the Messenger of Allah (S) and keeps to the line of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) since the time of Imam Ali (a.s.) until today. This group was called “*Shi’atu (followers of) Ali*” at the time of Imam Ali (a.s.), and later on, everyone who followed Imam Ali (a.s.) and the infallible Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), were called Shia (or Shiite).

If we look at the history and leaf through what historians have recorded, we find that the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) were wronged, kept away from the stage of the public life and were fought by the rulers and governments that ruled over Muslims during the first three centuries of Islam.

In fact, those rulers were successful in separating the nation from its real leadership, and keeping it away from the true path. However, they could not succeed in taking out the love and reverence for the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) from the hearts of Muslims. In spite of the abusing and cursing announced from above the minbars and the forcing of Muslims by all kinds of force, those rulers failed to extract the love of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) from the hearts of the faithful.

Due to this, we justify the contradiction we find today in most of Muslims that they love the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and acknowledge their superiority in virtues and knowledge, nevertheless they imitate other than them and refer to the rulings and legislations of imams who neither saw nor lived at the time of the Messenger of Allah (S), but they were born after the Great Sedition that distorted the religion, did away with the righteous leaving the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and their followers discarded and isolated.

The infallible Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) remained unknown by most of Muslims whom if you ask about “the Ahlul Bayt”, they shall say that they are the wives of the Prophet (S).

It is naturally clear that when the Prophet (S) ordered his nation to refer to his progeny, he did not mean his wives, but the twelve imams about whom he said:

The caliphs after me are twelve ones; all of them are from Quraysh.

And it is well known for all scholars and researchers that the infallible Imams (a.s.) tried their best and on every possible occasion to introduce themselves to people so that people might come back to them, but:

People are slaves to this worldly life, and religion is just a pretense on their tongues. They claim it as long as they are at ease, and when they are tried with affliction, the faithful become very few.

Therefore, Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, when reciting this verse:

And most surely I am most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good and then continues to follow the right path. Qur’an, 20:8,

and, then follows the right path of guardianship of we the Ahlul Bayt.

It may be understood from this holy verse too that it is not enough for the Muslims, who truly believe in Allah and His messenger to repent on their sins, do good deeds and give up bad deeds – in order to deserve the forgiveness of Allah the Almighty. They should be guided to the infallible Imams who are the successors of the Messenger of Allah (S) for they (the Imams) alone are the ones who can teach Muslims the real meanings of the Qur'an and the Sunna. Thus, Muslims' faith, deeds and repentance would be according to what Allah had imposed on them with no misinterpretation or distortion.

Since misinterpretation took place in the Holy Qur'an and distortion in the Prophet's Sunna and since every sect has relied upon a proof misinterpreted from the Qur'an and argued on basis of untrue traditions considered to be true by them, so disagreement, confusion and many doubts have surfaced.

Therefore, if a Muslim wants to know the truth, be protected from going astray, delivered on the Day of Resurrection and to win the Paradise and the contentment of Allah, he has to do nothing but to ride on the Ship of Deliverance and turn to the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), because they are the security for this *ummah* where Allah will not accept (the deeds of) a servant except when done in their way. No one shall enter (the Paradise) except from their gate. This is actually what the Prophet (S) asked the *ummah* to do due to the command of Allah the Almighty.

If we review the disagreement of the companions after the Prophet (S), we shall find that they disagreed for the sake of caliphate and authority over the *ummah* and every disagreement that came out after that was because of the caliphate. If unqualified people assume the rule and high posts, they certainly shall lead the nation to deviation because of their ignorance, selfishness and personal desires.

Today, as the Islamic Caliphate has gone to the unknown and there is nothing that may make it come back, would Muslims then return to their own reasons to observe the commands of their Prophet (S), follow the Book of their Lord and follow the progeny of their prophet in order to restore fraternity, concord and peace amongst themselves in order to make the *ummah* reunite and recover from its disagreement and separation? This is a cry from a pitiful, compassionate brother!

We have known from the previous discussion that guidance is a great blessing, which Allah has bestowed on His servants. And, we have known too that being guided to the guardianship of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and following them is a greater blessing that deserves the forgiveness of Allah the Almighty for His sinful servants. Then, how would *jihad* (strive) be for remaining fixed in this path?

Jihad in Islam is of two kinds; the *jihad* against enemy, which is called "the minor *jihad*", and the *jihad* against one's self (desires, fancies and lusts) which is called "the major *jihad*".

What concerns us in this subject is "the major *jihad*" which concern the soul and to treat it against perverse doctrinal diseases. One time, man is in *jihad* against himself and at another time in *jihad* against others. The *jihad* against oneself is accomplished by doing good deeds, being righteous,

accompanying good people, offering worships and being truthful in dealing with people according to what the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) have determined by narrating from their grandfather (S) who had received it from Allah the Almighty.

As for the *jihad* against others, it is accomplished by the enjoining of good, forbidding from the wrong and inviting to the way of Allah through wisdom and good exhortation. Such kind of *jihad* can be accomplished through speaking at one time and through the pen another time. This kind of *jihad* is better and greater near Allah than the *jihad* by the sword. The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

The ink of scholars is better near Allah than the blood of martyrs.

What scholars write to show and support the truth and explain different affairs for people to be guided to the right path of Allah through irrefutable arguments and convincing proofs is better near Allah than the blood of martyrs, although the blood of martyrs is holy and highly sanctified in Islam. On the other side, we find that some people struggle to impose the religion by force and coercion, where Allah says:

There is no compulsion in religion; truly, the right way has become clearly distinct from error.
Qur'an, 2:256.

Therefore, scholars and thinkers must try their best to spread the true Islam,² to introduce the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and their sciences, and spend from their monies and times. How many circles of disbelief, atheism and corruption are there which are financed with millions of dollars, whereas wealthy Muslims do not spend in the way of Allah except very scanty amounts!

We see that unbelievers come to Somalia under the pretense of saving its people from famine, whereas their brothers in religion are inadvertent to them.

We have seen the activities of the Christian Missionaries in the west and east of Africa, Egypt, Sudan, Indonesia and other Muslim countries. They offer to people over there, a little food and drugs that affect their hearts and they convert to Christianity after having been Muslims. Nonetheless, wealthy Muslims, whom Allah has endowed from His bounty and made as His deputies on earth to serve His people, are indifferent to everything. These wealthy people may go to the hajj twenty times and spend much monies every year, whereas in their neighborhood there are many hungry, destitute sufferers who find no one to offer them a bite of food to satisfy their empty stomachs, or a piece of cloth to cover their naked bodies.

Did the Messenger of Allah (S) not say, “*The nearest of you to Allah is the most useful of you to His servants*”?

Would Allah accept this deed (every-year-hajj), which He has imposed on people as a one-time obligation throughout their lives? The Messenger of Allah (S) performed the hajj one time in all his life because he might have wanted to make us realize that the wealthy people of this *ummah* may exaggerate in worships and ignore dealing with others (social communication and association), which is

the basis of the Sharia. Therefore, the Prophet (S) often said:

Certainly, the religion is (human) dealing.

So, how about the one who performs the hajj many times while he is in debt to people, or that some of his relatives are poor whom he does not help or feel pity for?

If we add to that the wasting and prodigality of smoking among Muslims, then the punishment shall be severe near Allah on the Day of Punishment. If we look with a general view at what is spent on smoking by Muslims, we shall be surprised by the statistics. For example, the number of Muslims in the world today is more than one milliard and if only one fifth of them smoke, then there shall be two hundred million smokers who spend two hundred million dollars a day, six milliard dollars a month, and seventy-two milliard dollars a year. Yes, Muslims spend at least seventy-two milliard dollars a year to buy fatal diseases!

O Muslims fear Allah for your selves and properties! If these monies of only ten years are collected, they shall be 720 milliard dollars, which shall suffice all poor Muslims in every spot of the earth:

And you deemed it trifle, while with Allah it is great. Qur'an 24: 15

In the end, I would like to attract the attention of my Shia brothers, who follow the school of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) towards the following points:

1. They have to argue with their Sunni brothers in the best manner and to avoid abusing and reviling which causes alienation. Imam Ali (a.s.) said:

Do not be abusers or cursers, but you say: 'they did so and so', and this is more effective in argument.

2. They have to avoid in their worships and dealings all the heresies that were not available at the time of the Prophet (S) or the time of the infallible imams (a.s.) – such as beating oneself with injurious tools until bleeding in Ashura. It makes others keep away from embracing the creed of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

Be propagandists for us by your deeds not your sayings! Be a source of praise to us and not a source of dispraise against us!

3. They have to pay much attention in their lectures and discussions to scientific matters that have proofs and evidences in the reliable books of the Sunni themselves. They have to avoid weak traditions that provoke disputes and disagree with reason.

4. They have to try their best to be good, pious and righteous – as their infallible Imams (a.s.) were. They have not to rely on the belief that Imam Ali (a.s.) would intercede for his followers and adherents. Imam Ali (a.s.) himself said:

Faith is not obtained by wishing or adorning, but faith is that which is fixed in the heart and proved by your sayings and doings.

5. They have to take lessons from the lives of the infallible Imams (a.s.) who have left incomparable treasures of knowledge and morals. For example, Nahjul Balaghah alone is a curative drug for all diseases. It is time for shaking off the ignorance and underdevelopment and take the nation to the high meanings of civilization and development. So, if the Imam of the Shia was the Gate to the City of knowledge, then his followers must be the first in all sciences.

6. The Shia have to unite and avoid all kinds of political partisanship and regional blocs. They have to strive to unite the religious authorities and obey them and thereafter, strive to unite all Muslims.

If the Shia followed these instructions, which I have taken from the Holy Qur'an, the Prophetic Sunna and the school of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) – security and peace shall prevail everywhere. If we changed the bad beliefs, ignorance and deviations inside ourselves, Allah will change our poverty and meanness into richness and glory, and make Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) reappear among us to fill the earth with justice and fairness after it has been filled with injustice and oppression.

1. The love to the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) has been considered as the recompense for the fulfilling of the mission by the Messenger of Allah (S). Allah says,

'Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives. Qur'an, 42:23

This love is the gate and the way to the contentment of Allah the Almighty and without this love the house may only be entered from the rear (wrong side) as Allah says:

...and it is not righteousness that you enter the houses from their backs. Qur'an, 2: 189

Imam Ali (a.s.) is the gate of the Prophet's city of knowledge. The Prophet (a.s.) often said, "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate". "Ali is with the truth and the Qur'an. He has divorced this worldly life thrice..."

Imam Ali (a.s.) did never compete for authority, nor did he strive for power, wealth, pleasures, desires, or lusts, but his great soul struggled to build the religion and firm on its pillars. He said, "By Allah, if the Arabs and foreigners gathered together against me, I would not run away." His strike against Amr ibn Abd Wudd that equaled the worship of men and the jinn, his plucking out of the gate of Khaybar...etc. were just a drop in the sea of his achievements.

Allah the Almighty had supported His messenger (a.s.) with Ali (a.s.). Refer to Tarikh Baghdad, vol. 11 p. 173. The same is mentioned in Thakha'ir al-Uqba and Kanzol Ummal. We see him weep for a Jewish woman who had resorted to Islam when been wronged by some man. He said, "I was informed that a man from you broke into (the house of) a Muslim woman and another covenanted one whom he plundered her necklaces, jewels, and adornments and she could not defend herself except by sighing and seeking Allah's mercy." Refer to Nahjul Balaghah, by Subhi as-Salih, p. 69.

He often said, "It is my soul that I tame with piety." He said, "Ah, for the lack of provision (good deeds and means for the afterlife), long distance of the journey, and the loneliness of the way!" (Nahjul Balaghah, by Subhi as-Salih, p. 480).

The great man of letters George Jerdaq loved him too much and wrote on him the best of his works. One of the popes composed poetry on him. Ibn Abil Hadeed loved and wrote on him. So did Muhammad Abdu, Subhi as-Salih, and the author of this book. Peace be on Ameerul Mo'minin, the highest example for mujahidin!

2. From the situations that the ulema and jurisprudents face is the trial they are tried with, and here, the advantages of Major Jihad, the struggling against one's self, and suppressing it shall appear clearly!

Sheikh Murtadha al-Ansari was a religious authority and one of the ulema who had been educated in the school of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). One night, one of his students saw in his sleep Iblis holding in his hands threads, ropes, and iron chains.

When he asked him about that, Iblis replied, “These are traps by which I attract people to me. Last night, I tried all these tools against Sheikh al-Ansari, but I failed, and in the end, the thick iron chain was broken.” When this student woke up, he hastened to the house of his teacher Sheikh al-Ansari and told him what he saw. After much insistence, the Sheikh said, “Last night, my wife was in parturition. My self enticed me to take from the monies of khums and zakat with me to hire a midwife, but I often and often resisted my self, and so on, until my wife gave birth to her child by herself. Then, I praised Allah too much.”

On the other side, we see those who gave a fatwa on the killing of Imam al-Husayn ibn Ali (a.s.) by saying, “Al-Husayn was killed by the sword of his grandfather (the Prophet Muhammad), because he rebelled against the imam of his time”. This was the statement of Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi al-Andalusi in his book al-Awasim, p. 232, verified by Muhyiddeen al-Khateeb!

When Harun al-Rasheed became the caliph, he was very fond of one of his father’s bondmaids. He tried to sleep with her, but she said to him, “I am not fit for you, because your father has slept with me.” However, he was very fond of her. He sent for his famous judge Abu Yousuf who was called as “the jurisprudent of the earth and its judge”. The judge replied to the caliph, saying, “Violate the inviolability of your father and satisfy your lust, and make it (the responsibility of sin) in my neck.” Refer to Tarikh al-Khulafa’ by as-Sayooti, p. 291.

Like al-Rasheed, Abu Yousuf, and these stories there were many rulers, royal court preachers, drinking companions, officials...etc.

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