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عَنْ أَبِي مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ
اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ . قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ :
لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يَكُونَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ .
حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ . رَوَيْنَاهُ فِي كِتَابِ الْحُجَّةِ بِإِسْنَادٍ
صَحِيحٍ .

Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah bin Amr bin al-'As, (رضي الله عنه), reported that the Messenger of Allah, (ﷺ), said: "None of you (truly) believes until his desire or inclination is in accordance with what I have brought or subservient to what I came with." [A fine and genuine hadith which was related by al-Maqdidsi in his Book of Hujjah]

Background

Imam Nawawi stated that the sanad (chain of authorities) of this hadith is authentic. However, many other scholars, including Ibn Rajab, stated that there are many defects in the chain of authorities. Sometimes the scholars consider a hadith as weak but this does not mean that what is stated in the hadith is weak. The meaning of this hadith has been emphasised in the Qur'an and strengthened by other hadiths. Allah says in Surah al-Nisa' Ayah 65:

But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad, (ﷺ)) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept them with full submission.

In Surah al-Ahzab Ayah 36, Allah says:

It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision.

Ustaz Jamaludin Zarabozo points out that there are sufficient authentic and acceptable evidences to prove what this hadith states. The main point that this hadith makes is that a believer will not be considered as fulfilling the obligatory level of faith or iman until he follows what the Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, has said - i.e. he loves what the Prophet, (ﷺ), commanded him to do and hates what the Prophet, (ﷺ), prohibited or made illegal.

Lessons

It is an obligation on every single believer to love what Allah loves and to hate what Allah hates to a degree that will motivate them to fulfill his or her obligations. If that love is increased above the level which will lead to fulfilling the preferable acts (mandoub), this is considered an additional preferable level. At the same time, he should hate or dislike what Allah hates or dislikes to the extent that will lead him to avoid all the prohibitions. If that level leads him to avoid what needs to be avoided, then that is an additional level that Allah will reward him for.

In the two Sahihs of Al-Bukhari and Muslim it is related that the Prophet, (ﷺ), said: "None of you will be truly a believer until I become more beloved to him than himself, his children, his family, and all the people." The true love necessitates that one has to follow whatever has been commanded by Allah and the Prophet, (ﷺ), as stated in Surah al-Imran Ayah 31-32:

Say (O Muhammad (ﷺ)): "If you (really) love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." Say (O Muhammad (ﷺ)): "Obey Allah and the Messenger." But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers.

The true believer is one who loves Allah and the Prophet, (ﷺ), truly and sincerely from his or her heart, and loves whatever Allah loves and whatever the Prophet, (ﷺ), loves, and hates whatever Allah hates and whatever the Prophet, (ﷺ), hates or dislikes. This love will lead him to act in accordance with these likes and dislikes. If someone acts in a different way, the obligatory love to Allah and the Prophet, (ﷺ), is not complete and has a defect. In this case, he has to repent and do his best to fulfill all the obligatory levels to achieve complete love to Allah and towards His Prophet, (ﷺ).

All the sins or disobedience that take place as a result of desires happen because self-desire is given a higher degree or outweighs the love of Allah and the love of the Prophet, (ﷺ). Allah attributes this in the Qur'an to the disbelievers. In Surah al-Qasas Ayah 50, Allah says:

But if they answer you not, then know that they only follow their own lusts. And who is more astray than the one who follows his own lusts, without guidance from Allah?

Allah also commanded one of his Prophets not to follow his desires. In Surah Saad Ayah 26, Allah says:

And follow not your desire, for it will mislead you from the Path of Allah.

Allah has made restraining desires one of the conditions to be fulfilled in order to enter Paradise. Allah says in Surah al-Nazi'at Ayah 40-41:

But as for him who feared standing before his Lord, and restrained himself from impure evil desires and lusts. Verily, Paradise will be his abode.

Anyone who does anything that contradicts with the Message that Allah sent His Prophet, (ﷺ), with and violates any of the instructions or prohibitions, is a person who is following his own desires. It should be noted that desire has to do with likes and dislikes. Likes and dislikes are not the main goal. Scholars say that the main point here is not to be influenced by those likes or dislikes. If someone likes something that violates the shari'ah, this person is following his own desires. If that person is influenced by those likes or dislikes, this will lead to an act. The act will lead to forms of actions which either pleases or displeases Allah. In both cases, the person has full responsibility and accountability. The responsibility and accountability are not for the likes or dislikes. They are for what the likes or dislikes lead him to.

It is known that following the desires is the reason behind many evil acts and it is also the basis for bid'ah (heresy). When someone follows his desires without evidence or truth, this will lead him to fall into bid'ah easily. And those who are misled by their desires are the first to follow misconceptions, as stated by many scholars. Whenever there is a misconception they easily fall into problems or troubles.

There are signs of following desires. One of the signs is neglecting or turning away from seeking beneficial 'ilm (the needed knowledge of Islam). Another sign of following desires is turning one's back from the guidance that the Prophet, (ﷺ), has come with.

Al-Imam Al-Shatibi, in his book *Al-Muwafaqat*, volume number 2, p. 168, mentions that the objective of shari'ah is to keep Muslims away from desires so that the believer will be a servant to Allah willingly and become an honest servant of Allah. He also states that following one's desires with regard to the rulings of shari'ah is a problematic issue where a person might use tricks to fulfill his desires, using deception in order to evade the rulings of shari'ah.

With regards to how one can control and deal with one's desires, firstly Al-Imam Al-Shatibi says that the main thing is to make the law of shari'ah and its rulings as a judging authority that every Muslim should respect, appreciate, and comply with. Secondly, some other scholars mention feeling Allah's presence, seeking knowledge, and the continuance remembrance of Allah are the ways of controlling self-desires. Thirdly, Imam Ibn Qayyim mentions about 50 ways of dealing with self-desires. Even those who are already influenced by self-desire can use any of these ways to get rid of their self-desires. He mentions this in his book *Rawdat al-Muhebin* (Garden of Lovers). The following are 15 selected ways:

1. Strong resolution.
2. Patience.
3. Self-courage.
4. Considering consequences.
5. Reflecting that Muslims have been created for a great mission which cannot be fulfilled except by controlling one's desires.
6. Not to be enslaved by self-desires.
7. To know that Satan is the enemy that gets through the servants of Allah. Satan uses desires to influence people.
8. To know that following self-desires will lead to someone's destruction and punishment by Allah.
9. To know that fighting desires by making an effort in order not to be influenced by the desires is one of the greatest forms of jihad. Fighting desires is the essential message of Islam. Muslims are required to make every effort to adhere to the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah.
10. To know that the one who lets the desires take over and lead him will spoil his intellectual opinion.
11. To know that following desires will weaken the eagerness for performing good deeds. The opposite is also true in this case - that is, not following desires leads to strengthening one's motivation to perform good deeds.
12. To know that not being misled by desires will lead to the honour in this life and the Hereafter.
13. To know that following desires is the main cause of the spiritual heart disease and the remedy of the disease is to not follow desires. We have to make jihad to fight desires otherwise we will not be able to fight our enemies.
14. To know that seeking knowledge and feeding it by performing the preferable acts will strengthen one's faith.
15. To know that we need to be enlightened by the Qur'an and Sunnah. This requires us to make the effort to recite the Qur'an in order to know the meaning and the wisdom behind the ayahs.

Conclusion

Though this hadith is considered a weak hadith, it states a very important meaning: in order to fulfill one's faith, one has to make a continuous effort to control his or her self-desires and to like what Allah and the Prophet, (ﷺ), like, and to dislike what Allah and the Prophet, (ﷺ), dislikes. This is actually a very important task which we are required to do in order to adhere to the path of Allah. The result will be attaining Allah's pleasure and being honoured in this life and the Hereafter by being a truly honest, sincere servant of Allah.

Muslims must be sincere in their efforts to fight self-desires. The issue is not to like or dislike but what the result of this likes or dislikes is. For instance, if someone is sleeping before dawn in the early morning and then he hears the call for Fajr prayer but is too lazy or sleepy to wake up to perform the salah, this is considered following his self-desires. Everyone likes to sleep but the problem is the result of this leads us to delay or miss the Fajr prayer (a wajibat).

Another example is food. There are many things that we can eat but if they are not halal, we have to refrain from consuming them. A third example is the love of money. To like money is one thing but to be misled by money is a problem because this will lead the heart to be enslaved to money and the worldly life. This explains why the scholars say that committing sins is actually a result of desires.

We should make the shari'ah as the judging authority for everything we do. Before we do something, we should ask ourselves: Is this act based on a sound reason? If the answer is not, then we are following the desires. This is why Allah labels the Qur'an as Al-Furqan or as the criterion that distinguishes what is right and what is wrong.