

Allegiance Until the Sacrifice of Life

Question:

How has allegiance (al-Bay'a) been practiced in the history of Islam, and why is it necessary for the people to pledge loyalty to their leader?



Allegiance, in Islamic teachings and Shiite culture, has a history spanning over 14 centuries and holds such importance that God designates the participants of the "Bay'a ar-Ridwān" as worthy of Paradise, granting them three great rewards: His satisfaction, peace in their hearts, and the promise of an imminent victory, which most Quranic exegeses identify with the conquest of Khaybar.

The allegiances of men and women to the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the conquest of Mecca, the pledge for succession to Imam Ali (peace be upon him) on the day of Ghadir, and the people's allegiance to Imam Ali (peace be upon him) twenty years after the previous pledge—all constitute a treasury of information, analyses, lessons, and points for reflection. In summary, wherever there is a decision to "remain" and "persevere," allegiance and oath come into play.

Allegiance means giving one's word and remaining faithful to that pledge even unto the sacrifice of life. It signifies a commitment to be a loyal and obedient companion, without raising "questions" or "objections." Allegiance means trust and confidence in the Prophet (peace be upon him) and

the Wali in their commands and decisions. The most notable sign of allegiance is "obedience."

The interesting point is that, according to the sacred verse: "Obey Allah, obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you" (Quran 4:59), as soon as a person becomes the Wali al-Amr (legitimate authority), it becomes obligatory to pledge allegiance to them. God has made obedience to the Wali obligatory, just as it is to Him and His Prophet (peace be upon him). Clearly, it is allegiance that brings about obedience. By pledging allegiance to the Wali, the person is introduced into the arena where the Wali must make decisions and act to fulfill their role, which requires the cooperation and support of those pledging allegiance. Therefore, the absence or breaking of allegiance is neither wise nor legitimate.

As the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him) said, one of the three groups mentioned in the verse: "Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He look at them or purify them, and for them there will be a painful punishment"—are those who pledge allegiance to an Imam but remain faithful to their oath only as long as their worldly interests are secured.

The status of the Imams' (peace be upon them) representative through the "Wali al-Faqih" is a position designated by the infallible Imams (peace be upon them). Like the position of the Imam himself, it requires both the allegiance and obedience of the people. The support and obedience of the people enable him to exercise influence and make decisions and take actions in accordance with the public interest. Clearly, since he is the representative of the Imam and a qualified jurist, he practices justice, controls his passions, knows how to guide, and is capable of managing public affairs. This distinction clearly demonstrates that a government based on the principle of "Wali al-Faqih" differs significantly from other forms of governance.

What is observed today in the streets and squares of Islamic Iran, through popular participation, is the concrete and tangible expression of the people's allegiance to the Wali of God; the people remain faithful to the path set by the martyred leader, supporting the Supreme Leader even under bombardments and missile attacks. This shows that allegiance to the Wali of God elevates a person to an almost divine level, prompting

him to sincerely offer his life and property for God and to uphold obedience to the Wali.

In short, it can be said that allegiance to the Wali al-Faqih gains meaning as a continuation of allegiance to the infallible Imam (peace be upon him). This allegiance constitutes acceptance of the guardianship of the Wali al-Faqih as the general representative of the Imam during the era of the Imam of the Time's (peace be upon him) occultation and the commitment to follow him in achieving the noble objectives of Islam and the Islamic society. This allegiance encompasses both a political aspect (leadership) and a religious aspect (spiritual commitment).

