

YAQEEN INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC RESEARCH

# 40 HADITHS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

## LECTURE NOTES

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This week's hadith is also narrated by Abu Dhar al-Ghifari (ra). The Prophet (ﷺ) said about him (رضي الله عنه)

ما أقلت الغبراء ولا أظلت الخضراء من رجل أصدق لأبي ذر

“The earth has not carried nor has the sky covered a man more trustworthy or truthful than Abu Dhar.”

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ، قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَا تَسْتَعْمِلُنِي قَالَ فَضْرَبَ  
بِيَدِهِ عَلَيَّ مَنْكِبِي ثُمَّ قَالَ " يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ إِنَّكَ ضَعِيفٌ وَإِنَّهَا أَمَانَةٌ  
وَإِنَّهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ جَزَاءٌ وَنَدَامَةٌ إِلَّا مَنْ أَخَذَهَا بِحَقِّهَا وَأَدَّى الَّذِي  
عَلَيْهِ فِيهَا " .

“Will you not appoint me to a public office?”  
He stroked my shoulder with his hand and said: “Abu Dhar, you are weak and authority is a trust. And on the day of judgment it (worldly authority) is a cause of disgrace and remorse except for one who fulfills its obligations and (properly) discharges its duties.” [Sahih Muslim]

It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Dhar who said: I said to the Prophet (ﷺ): Messenger of Allah,

Abu Dhar wasn't asking out of ego. The Prophet (ﷺ) had already testified to his purity. He genuinely wanted to be used and was inquiring for the sake of Allah so he could be in a position to do more good for the sake of his religion.

The majority of wealthy people will not enter *jannah*. Likewise, most people who were in positions of power in the *dunya* will be disgraced on the day of judgment.

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: " يا أبا ذر إني أراك  
ضعيفاً، وإني أحبُّ لك ما أحبُّ لنفسِي، لا تأمرن على اثنين ولا  
تولين مال يتيم" ((رواه مسلم)).

Another hadith narrates that Abu Dhar said about the Prophet (ﷺ), “He said to me, I see you to be a weak man. I love for you what I love for myself. Don't ever find yourself in a position where you are in charge of two people. And don't ever be entrusted with the wealth of an orphan.

He (ﷺ) wasn't trying to insult him. He wanted salvation for him so he could enter *jannah*. Even though Abu Dhar had so much *taqwa* (piety), the Prophet (ﷺ) said, you are not qualified to ever be in a leadership position.

Some lessons we learn from this:

- 1) The first form of injustice you need to fight is the injustice of your own self. You need to protect yourself from being in a place of injustice. If being in a position in which it is your responsibility to solve other people's problems causes you to become problematic yourself, then you'll ruin yourself (by being unjust); it's not

worth it. It starts with yourself and making sure you're not going to do something to ruin your *akhira*. No glory in the world is worth humiliation in the *akhira*.

- 2) There are two explanations for why the Prophet (ﷺ) called Abu Dhar weak. One is that Abu Dhar did not belong to one of the powerful tribes so he might not have been taken seriously by the companions. But that explanation isn't satisfying because the Prophet (ﷺ) did appoint others as leaders who came from less powerful tribes. The explanation that makes more sense is that the Prophet (ﷺ) was talking about restraint and temper. The Prophet (ﷺ) has said that the strong person isn't the one who can overcome his opponent. The strong person is the one who controls himself in a time of anger. Abu Dhar would sometimes get into arguments, so maybe he didn't have the restraint necessary to be in leadership. The messenger was worried about him compromising his status in the hereafter. The Prophet (ﷺ) told him: "You will live alone. You will die alone. And you will be raised on the day of judgment alone."

A just ruler enables society to be filled with righteousness and justice. Most of the problems we have had in the *ummah* have been due to betrayal and the pursuit of power. Islamic history can be summed up in two words: betrayal and conquest. Most of what corrupts our *ummah* is the pursuit of power. More people will fight over power than wealth.

The prophet (ﷺ) was asked, "When is the day of judgment?"

He responded, "When trust is lost then await the hour."

They then asked, "How is trust lost?"

He responded, "When authority is given to those who do not deserve it. Then wait for the hour."

Sufyan Ath-Thauri said there are two categories of people who if they are righteous everyone in the society will be righteous and if they are corrupt everyone else will be corrupt. The two categories are the scholars and the rulers.

There is an important distinction between leadership as a goal and leadership as a means to another goal; the messengers were all given leadership as a means of influencing people towards righteousness.

Leadership as a means to furthering righteousness in society is praiseworthy; wanting a position of leadership as a goal in and of itself is problematic.

It is important to be aware of your own motives - is it for Allah (swt) solely? Or do you have a desire to be elevated in the eyes of people?

Disconnect yourself from the desire of being elevated in this world; the key is to guard your prayer and private worship.

The quest for leadership can ruin your spirituality; one of the biggest tricks of shaytaan is that he convinces those in positions of leadership that they do not need to continue with spiritual practices.

Never ask to be in a position of leadership. If you are given leadership after asking for it, you will lose the support of Allah (swt). If you are given a position of leadership without asking for it, you will maintain the support of Allah (swt). Thus, the help of Allah in a position of leadership is conditioned upon your not seeking/requesting that position for yourself.

Umar (ra) was the best *khalifa* because he desired leadership the least; so Allah (swt) helped him the most.

When is it permissible to seek leadership?

- 1) If people find you qualified and ask you to lead them. Then you should ask Allah for protection and you should do it. Unless you know there is a good reason you shouldn't (e.g., hidden corruption or something within you that you know would make you not a good leader);
- 2) You need to ask people you trust to be sincere in their advice to you on whether you would be a good and just leader.

Imam al-Ghazali says that nothing should cause you to take on a position other than the truth and nothing should cause you to hold back from taking on a position other than the truth. It is the fear of Allah that will scare a person into refraining from leadership when they know they are not the most qualified. And it is also the fear of Allah that should push a person to take it on when they see the job is not being done well and they know they are qualified and could do it better.

*Haqq* (truth) should be the motivator, not the self. How do you know that truth is motivating you?

Two questions you need to ask yourself:

- 1) Would you only do the work in a leadership role? If you're not committed to the cause without the position, then you probably only desire leadership for your ego. To be sincere, you should work for the cause regardless of whether you have a position of leadership.

- 2) Ask yourself: “Is the position beautifying you or are you beautifying the position?”  
Does the title make you? Or do you make the title?

Sometimes the most qualified person for a given position is not the most religious person. Sometimes personality issues or other obligations may prevent a person from being a good leader; it's not just about *taqwa*.

You need to be honest about your own capacities/limits. Even if others think you are qualified and you know you're not, don't take on positions of leadership.