

## Obedience to the Messenger Is Obedience to God

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*Muslim Thinker — Turkey*

One of the most important acts of worship that God commands believers in the Qur'an is obedience to His messengers. God says He has sent messengers to be obeyed; and believers, in every age, have been tested in their obedience to the messengers. Messengers are the people who convey God's message and His commands to people and warn them of the Day of Reckoning and of its signs. They are the sincere and blessed people who are chosen by God over the rest of the people and whose acts, attitudes, and perfect morals are exemplary. They are the friends of God who are drawn near to Him. Obedience to messengers is the indication of one's obedience to God:

80 ( )

**[Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed God. If anyone turns away, we did not send you to them as their keeper.] (An-Nisaa' 4:80)**

On the other hand, disobedience to a messenger is direct disobedience to God and His religion. God relates the state of those who obey the Messenger and those who don't:

النساء (14) (13)

**(These are limits set by God. As for those who obey God and His Messenger, We will admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever. That is the Great Victory. As for those who disobey God and His Messenger and overstep His limits, We will admit them into a Fire to abide therein. They will have a humiliating punishment.) (An-Nisaa' 4:13-14)**

God has revealed many details in the Qur'an about obedience to the messenger and made clear how the true obedience and submission should be as well as the kind of obedience acceptable in His sight. As also seen in these verses, the fulfillment of all requirements of the religion and rendering too much services for its cause is not adequate. If a person fails to adopt the attitude and morality pertaining to the obedience to the messenger in the sense God describes in the Qur'an and displays imperfections in his obedience, it may well be that God may render all his actions void. Some of the relevant verses are examined below:

(65)

**[No, by your Lord, they are not believers until they make you their judge in the disputes that break out between them and then find no resistance within themselves to what you decide and submit themselves completely.] (An-Nisaa' 4:65)**

In this verse, a very important principle about the ideal obedience to the Messenger is revealed. Most people know the concept of obedience. However, obedience to the Messenger is much different from all other forms of obedience people know. As God states in the verse above, believers should obey the Messenger wholeheartedly, without harboring the slightest doubt or showing any hesitation. If one feels any doubt about what the Messenger says and considers his own ideas more accurate than the Messenger's, then this, as the verse suggests, essentially means he is not a true believer.

Believers with true faith and submission know that what the Messenger says is the best for them. Even if his words are in conflict with their personal interests, they accept and obey him eagerly and with enthusiasm. This virtuous conduct is a sign of true faith, and God gives the glad tidings of salvation to those who obey the Messenger with such submissiveness. Some of the verses in which God gives this good news are as follows:

(69)

**[Whoever obeys God and the Messenger will be with those whom God has blessed: The Prophets and the truthful, the witnesses (who testify) and the righteous (who do good). What excellent company such people are!](An-Nisaa' 4:69)**

(52)

**[All who obey God and His Messenger and have awe of God and fear Him, they are the ones who are victorious.](An-Nur 24:52)**

(54)

**[Say: "Obey God and obey the Messenger. If you should turn away, he is only responsible for what he is charged with and you are responsible for what you are charged with. If you obey him, you will be guided." The Messenger is only responsible for conveying the message clearly.](An-Nur 24:54)**

As stated above, those who obey the Messenger will be rightly guided. Throughout history, all people have been tested in their obedience to the messengers. God has always chosen His messengers among people. In this context, some narrow-minded and unwise people have not

grasped how to obey a man from among themselves or a man who is not wealthier than themselves. However, God chose His messengers, provided support to them, and gave them knowledge and strength. The essence of the matter these people fail to fully understand is that God chooses whomever He wills. A sincere believer wholeheartedly obeys and respects whom God has chosen, and becomes heartily devoted. He knows that each time he obeys the Messenger, he in fact obeys God. Those who are submissive to God and religion are completely submissive to His Messenger too. God relates the situation of those who submit themselves to Him as follows,

(112)

**[Not so! All who submit themselves completely to God and are good-doers will find their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and will know no sorrow.]** (Al-Baqarah 2:112)

In a verse, God states the following,

(3)

**[You who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet and do not be loud when speaking to him as you are when speaking to one another, lest your actions should become vain without your realizing it. Those who lower their voices when they are with the Messenger of God are people whose hearts God has disposed towards God. They will have forgiveness and an immense reward.]** (Al-Hujurat 49:3)

God's Messenger always invites believers to the right path. There are surely times these calls of messengers conflict with the interests of the people around them. However, those who believe and obey the Messenger do not pursue their opinion, but rather yield to the words of God (the Qur'an) and His Messenger. On the other hand, those with poor faith or those who cannot hold their desires under control may show disobedience or weakness upon the call of the Messenger. As stated in the verse, their voices, speeches, and words they utter may reveal the sickness in their hearts and their weakness in obedience. They may be so unwise to oppose what the Messenger says and to raise their voices above his. God informs us that deeds of these people will be rendered void. God has informed that all efforts of such a person, even if he works day and night in order to spread the values of religion, could come to nothing on account of his disobedience.

*This is a very important principle revealed in many verses in the Qur'an. God has commanded people to perform good deeds, to serve eagerly and firmly for the benefit of Islam, to act in compliance with the good morals described in the Qur'an, to be generous, steadfast, tolerant, truthful, and faithful. No doubt, all these are important forms of worship that will be of help to him in the hereafter. However, as seen in Surat Al-Hujurat, a single act of disrespectful behavior*

*towards God's Messenger may render all that person's deeds in vain. This, undoubtedly, reminds us once again of how important it is to obey and respect God's messengers.*

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*\* Excerpted, with kind permission and with some modifications, from the author's website.*

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