MONTHLY AHKAM | JANUARY 2022 - 1 /Jan/ 2022

Diagram Presentation of Precepts Pertinent to Enjoining Religious Rules

Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the evil as an Obligatory Act

Enjoining to do obligatory acts or forbidding ḥarām acts is one of the most important and great duties in Islam. People who abandon this great divine duty or are indifferent to it are sinners and a severe punishment awaits them. Enjoining others to do obligatory acts or from doing ḥarām acts is not only obligatory according to all scholars of Islam, but its obligation is one of the essentials of the religion of Islam.

The scope of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil

Enjoining others to do obligatory acts or from doing ḥarām acts as a duty is not limited to a specific class; rather, it includes all qualified classes and guilds. Even it is obligatory for a woman or a child to enjoin her husband or their parents if they neglect an obligatory act or do a forbidden act. Therefore, if the conditions are met, they must enjoin them.

This obligation applies to a situation in which a person violates Shariah knowingly and intentionally, but it is necessary to guide and instruct those who commit sins due to ignorance of the Shariah.*

*** There are two obligations with different rules and conditions: a) to enjoin b) to guide.**

It is not obligatory to enjoin those who commit a sin due to failure to give attention or due to ignorance of the rule. The same rule applies to enjoining those who commit a sin due to failure to give attention or ignorance of the subject of a rule unless the subject enjoy a great importance before Allah. In these cases, we must notify the related person and attract his attention towards the rule / the subject.

Conditions for Enjoining to Be Obligatory

Knowing obligatory and ḥarām acts:

The person who enjoins must know the obligatory and ḥarām act; Otherwise, he is not obligated to enjoin others.

If one does not consider an action as ḥarām or obligatory due to ijtihād or taqlīd, it is not obligatory for another person who consider it obligatory/ ḥarām to enjoin the former.

Probability of Being Effective

When one thinks that enjoining can be effective – even in the future, it is obligatory for them to do so even if there is a strong possibility that it will not be effective.

If enjoining another person to do an obligatory act or from doing a ḥarām act by a single person is not effective but it can be effective in case of coordination and getting help from others, it is necessary to coordinate and get the help for this important duty.

3. To insist on the sin

The sinner insists on the continuation of the sin. Therefore, if it is known or even probable that he will give up the error without being enjoined (that is, he will do the obligatory act and refrain from committing the sin), it is not obligatory for you to enjoin him.

No vile consequence.

Enjoining does not lead to a vile consequence. Therefore, if there is a rational possibility that it will result in a bad consequence – e.g. such as loss of life, reputation or money to oneself or any other Muslim or they will face unbearable hardship, enjoining is not obligatory; rather, in some cases, it is not permissible.

Of course, if the obligatory/ḥarām act is of great importance before Allah (e.g. to maintain the life of a group of people, to maintain Islam), one must take the importance into consideration, i.e. the mere loss, unbearable hardship, or the like does not exempt one from enjoining. Therefore, for example, when the establishment of divine proofs to ward off misguidance is achieved at the expense of the life of one or more people, the obligation of enjoining is not abolished.

An important point:

Enjoining others to do an obligatory act or from doing a ḥarām one is obligatory on all four conditions. Therefore, if it lacks one of

the conditions (for example, leading to a bad consequence), enjoining is not obligatory, even if other conditions are available.

Precepts Pertinent to Enjoining Religious Rules

Steps and levels of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil:

1. Heart enjoining.

By heart enjoining, it is meant to express one's hatred; that is, mukallaf must express his inner hatred and disgust for somebody's committing a sinful act or neglecting an obligation.

2. Oral enjoining

A mukallaf must orally enjoin others to do obligatory acts or forbidding ḥarām acts. In this step, if it seems probable that the aim will be achieved through preaching, advice and gentle speech, one should not take a more serious step.

However, if other's avoiding a sin or performing an obligation depends on a harsh speech, or threat, one must act accordingly.

3. Practical enjoining

By practical enjoining, we mean that one must prevent the offender from committing a sin or avoiding an obligation by exerting authority and using physical effort.

Note that at the time of an established Islamic government, the practical enjoining is the duty of the government and not the individuals.

Consideration: When enjoining, the order among the above steps must be observed; i.e. as long as the first level is effective, it is not permissible to use the next level, for example, there are different level for oral enjoining. Therefore, when soft speech can be effective, it is not permissible to use offensive or harsh remarks.