The forty Hadith about the virtues of Martyrdom

Chapter 2

It is necessary that the believer’s fighting is for elevating the Word of Allah.

- Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Libi (Rahimahullah) -
The Second Hadith

Abu Musa, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that:
A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, “A man fights for war booty; and a man fights for fame and a man fights for showing off; which of these is fighting in Allah’s Cause?”
The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “He who fights so that Allah’s Word (i.e. Islam) becomes superior, then he is the one fighting in Allah’s Cause.” (Agreed upon)

Some lessons from the Hadith

1. Asking the people of knowledge about the unclear matters in religion.
2. Eagerness of the Sahaba in knowing the truth and clarification in matters, and seeking to do them based on insight.
3. The danger of submitting to one’s soul (desires), and being cautious of responding to its temptations, as they may lead him towards destruction while he is striving to get mentioned and praised by people, and then his only gain will be that (he will be told) “it has been said” (which Allah will say to him on the Day of Judgment before throwing him into hellfire).
4. The path of truth is only one, but the paths of falsehood are many and different.
5. It is necessary for the Mujahid to empty his soul from self-interests, and he must not have any aim other than uplifting the truth and giving victory to it.

6. If the outer action matches with the Shareeah that does not necessarily mean that the inner intentions are in consistence with it. This has also been pointed out by the previous Hadith. Hijrah and fighting has one appearance, but the intentions for them vary, like what Al Allamah ibn Al Haaj al Maaliki has said: “Hijrah is one and the same in action, yet one may be for the sake of Allah and another for other than Allah’s sake, according to what the inner self holds, which is the intention. Imam Abu Abdulllah Malik ibn Anas, may Allah have mercy upon him, said “Do you not see that prostrating to Allah and prostrating to an idol have the same appearance, however one of them is an act of worship and the other is an act of disbelief, depending on the intention?” (Al Madkhal 1/7)

7. Severe warning against seeking worldly gains using the action of the hereafter.
8. The nobility of Jihad, which is due to its noble goal, which is to raise the Word of Allah.
9. Qitaal (fighting) is a way to raise the Word of Allah and to establish His law, as these become dominant through it.
10. The inclination of the soul towards immaterial gains like fame and seeking praise is not less than its desire for materialistic gains. And all of them are dangerous for it.
11. The necessity for the Mujahid to take care of his intention for it to be only to make the Word of Allah dominant. Imam at Tahawi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said “The fighter is not entitled to be a martyr due to his fighting, unless his intention is to elevate the word of Allah”
12. Jihad is an act of worship and needs sincerity and the correct intention.

13. The meaning here of “Fee Sabeelillah (in the path of Allah)” is only for the one who intends to elevate the word of Allah by his fighting.

14. The validity of the principle of “Mafhoom al Mukhaalafa” (Understanding based on the opposite meaning) with its conditions, to establish Islamic rulings. When the man asked the Prophet (ﷺ) a direct question he replied to him with a statement whose meaning would mean the opposite of what the man said. He did not say “whoever fights for war booty is not fighting in the path of Allah, and whoever fights for fame is not fighting in the way of Allah, and whoever fights to show off is not fighting in the path of Allah”, even though this is what was meant by his answer.

Miscellaneous

Firstly: Some of the titles for this chapter by the Imams:

Al Bukhari gave the title for this chapter as “The one who fights for the word of Allah to be the highest”. Also, “Will the reward be decreased for the one who fights for war spoils?”

Imam Muslim named the chapter as “The one who fights so that the word of Allah is the highest, is in the path of Allah.”

Imam Bayhaqi named it as “Clarifying the intention upon which one fights for it to be in the cause of Allah.”

Tirmidhi gave the title as “What has been mentioned regarding the one who fights for showing off and for worldly gains.”

Nasaai put it under the title “The one who fights so that the word of Allah is the highest.”

Ibn Majah under the title “The Intention while fighting”

Ibn Hibban under “Description of the fighting in the path of Allah for which Allah rewards the one who does so”

Secondly: Taqiyudeen al Subki said “The one who fights (to show) his bravery or to show off or out of family pride and is not fighting for Allah, then he is not in the path of Allah. This is a clear cut issue. And what is clear is that he is not called a martyr because the two meanings put down to classify one as a martyr aren’t there in his case and there is no Nass (text from Quran or Sunnah) stating him to be a martyr. However we think of him as a Martyr in relation to his outward appearance as we do not know his corrupted intention”. [Fataawa Al-Subki: 2/344]

Ibn Daqeeq al Eid, may Allah have mercy upon him, said “In this Hadith there is an evidence that it is necessary to have sincerity in Jihad and clarification that the one who fights to (show his) bravery or for tribalism or showing off is not included in that”.

Thirdly: Imam Ibn AbdulBarr, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: “Everyone who fights for the word of Allah to be the highest and for the word of the disbelievers to be the lowest is in paradise, if Allah wills” [Al-Tamheed: 18/345]