

The Worldly and Hereafter Benefits of Obeying those in Authority: An Analytical Study in Light of Islamic Texts

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v15-i6/25738> DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v15-i6/25738

Published Date: 17 June 2025

Abstract

Obedience to those in authority is one of the fundamental principles established by Islam. This research, titled "*The Worldly and Hereafter Benefits of Obeying Those in Authority: An Analytical Study in Light of Islamic Texts*", explores the significance of such obedience based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, focusing on its role in achieving stability and order within Muslim societies and its impact on both individuals and the community in this life and the hereafter. The study aims to highlight the worldly and eternal dimensions of lawful obedience by analyzing relevant religious texts, clarifying their meanings, and emphasizing its role in strengthening security, unity, and development. Employing an analytical and deductive methodology, the research draws upon Islamic texts and scholarly opinions to extract the benefits of obedience to authority in both domains. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of this concept in Islam, affirming its importance in building cohesive, law-abiding communities while avoiding chaos and division. Among the key findings are that obedience to authority fosters social, economic, and political stability, promotes unity and progress, and brings significant rewards in the hereafter, such as salvation on the Day of Judgment, divine honor, and being under God's shade. The research asserts that obedience must be within the bounds of what is right and lawful. The structure of the study includes an introduction and preamble, followed by two main sections: worldly benefits and hereafter benefits of obedience, and concludes with key findings and recommendations.

Keywords: Obedience to Authority, Islamic Texts, Social Stability, Worldly and Hereafter Benefits

Introduction

Obedience to those in authority is considered one of the fundamental principles in Islamic law, due to its crucial role in achieving security, stability, and unity. However, there is a scarcity of contemporary studies that address this concept from a comprehensive perspective, linking its worldly and spiritual outcomes in light of Islamic texts. This

shortcoming has led to a lack of clear understanding among many researchers and members of society regarding the full dimensions of this principle, particularly with regard to its spiritual effects and implications in the Hereafter. Hence, the research problem lies in the need for a well-grounded analytical study that highlights these outcomes through an approach that combines textual analysis with practical reality, contributing to the reinforcement of legitimate obedience to those in authority and emphasizing its relationship with fulfilling the objectives of Sharia and building Islamic civilization.

Contribution of Research to Society

This research contributes to society by highlighting the importance of obeying those in authority in achieving both religious and worldly stability, thereby enhancing security and unity while preventing discord and division. It emphasizes that such obedience, when aligned with what is right, leads to the nation's economic and social advancement and benefits both individuals and the community. Furthermore, it explains the spiritual reward of obedience as a means to attain Allah's pleasure and honor on the Day of Judgment, motivating Muslims to uphold order and Sharia, and to build a cohesive and progressive society.

Objectives

This study aims to achieve a number of scholarly and Sharia-based objectives, as follows:

- 1- To analyze the Sharia texts related to obedience to those in authority (Ulu al-Amr), and to derive their meanings and purposes in light of the methodology of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah.
- 2- To clarify the worldly benefits of obeying those in authority, by highlighting its role in achieving social stability, enhancing security and peace, strengthening the unity of the Ummah, ensuring economic stability, and contributing to civilizational progress.
- 3- To shed light on the rewards in the Hereafter for obeying those in authority, such as possessing a valid argument before Allah, receiving divine honor on the Day of Judgment, and being shaded under the Throne of the Most Merciful.
- 4- To emphasize the close relationship between obedience to those in authority and the realization of the public interest of the Ummah in both religious and worldly affairs, and to show how this obedience reflects positively on individuals and society.
- 5- To warn against the harms of rebelling against legitimate authority, and to highlight the serious consequences of such rebellion both in this world and in the Hereafter.

The Importance of the Research

The significance of this research can be highlighted in the following points:

- 1- Establishing the Sharia-based concept of obedience to those in authority: This study aims to clarify the Islamic foundations of obedience and its conditions as derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. It helps correct misconceptions about this concept, especially in light of the political and ideological turmoil facing the Muslim world today.
- 2- Explaining the worldly fruits of obedience: The research explores the positive outcomes of obeying those in authority, such as political and social stability, the enhancement of security, unity, development, and progress, all of which contribute to the civilizational advancement of the ummah.
- 3- Highlighting the rewards in the Hereafter: The study shows that obedience to just rulers, within the bounds of Islamic teachings, is a cause of divine reward in the Hereafter—such

as gaining Allah's pleasure, having a valid argument before Him, receiving honor on the Day of Judgment, and being shaded under His Throne.

- 4- Serving the contemporary needs of the Muslim community: This research offers a balanced and principled Islamic perspective to address the challenges in the ruler-subject relationship today, emphasizing a proper balance between obedience and constructive advice, in a way that benefits religion, the state, and society.

Reasons for Choosing the Topic

- 1- The concept of obedience to those in authority holds a foundational position in Islamic jurisprudence, reflecting the broader principle of submission to divine will as embodied in obedience to Allah and His Messenger.
- 2- The study underscores the critical role of lawful obedience in fostering societal harmony, preserving security, and maintaining public order factors that are particularly vital amid modern-day challenges.
- 3- This topic highlights the eternal implications of obedience, illustrating how compliance with legitimate authority in righteous matters leads to divine reward and salvation in the Hereafter.
- 4- The research seeks to demonstrate how obedience in accordance with Islamic principles serves as a deterrent against civil unrest, sectarian conflict, and the fragmentation of the Muslim ummah.
- 5- The subject is deeply grounded in primary Islamic sources namely, the Qur'an and authentic Hadith which not only reinforce its legitimacy but also provide a sound basis for analytical and doctrinal exploration.

The Worldly Benefits of Obeying Those in Authority

Obedience to those in authority in Islam holds great importance, and it brings immediate worldly benefits (Al-Huqail, 1997), as will be explained in the following subsections.

Social Stability

By obeying those in authority, stability prevails in the nation, and this is a clear matter. Obedience to them signifies the authority of the Shariah over all actions, and the control of desires that lead to sin, wrongdoing, and deviation. This is because obedience brings benefit and goodness to society, and this is something that the nation should not ignore. Therefore, the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said: *"There is no obedience in disobedience to Allah..."* (Al-Hakim, 1990), those in authority are only to be obeyed in what is right, and this obedience results in the stability of the individual, then the stability of society, and ultimately the stability of the entire nation.

Preserving Security and Peace

The Prophet PBUH instructed that punitive measures be taken against anyone who attempts to undermine obedience to those in authority or sow division within the unified body of the Muslim community. This is because such actions constitute the initial stages of trials (fitan) and widespread corruption. The Prophet stated: *"There will be disturbances and turmoil; so whoever seeks to divide the unity of this Ummah while it is united, strike him with the sword regardless of who he may be"* (Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, 2006). This ḥadīth contains a clear directive from the Prophet to the entire Muslim community to adhere to the authority of their leaders, given the considerable turmoil and harm that arises from disobedience. Furthermore,

the Prophet issued a stern warning against breaking the bond of obedience to the rulers, disengaging from the collective body (jamā'ah), or inflicting harm upon the Muslim populace. In the complete narration as reported by Imām al-Nasā'ī, it is stated: *"..the Hand of Allah is over the group; Satan is with the one who separates from the group, pursuing him"* (al-Nasā'ī, 1988). Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī explains: "The Hand of Allah is over the group" refers to His tranquility and mercy being with those who are united and in agreement. However, when they become divided and fall into disagreement, that tranquility is withdrawn, and internal strife is cast among them (al-Jazarī, 1969).

The Nation is United

Listening and obeying those in authority brings about unity and defense, and it establishes resilience in the face of present challenges. Today, Muslims are confronting the schemes of their enemies, who despite differing in ideologies and perspectives are united in their opposition to Islam and Muslims. Therefore, the unity of Muslims through obedience to those in authority showcases the greatness of the religion and unleashes the power of faith. Islam alone has the ability to bind hearts together, and for that reason, Allah the Blessed and Exalted said: *"And hold firmly together to the rope of Allah and do not be divided. Remember Allah's favour upon you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts, so you-by His grace-became brothers. And you were at the brink of a fiery pit and He saved you from it. This is how Allah makes His revelations clear to you, so that you may be rightly guided"* (Aali Imraan: 103), The verse contains a directive to uphold unity and a warning against disintegration, and unity can only be achieved through obedience to those in authority.

Economic Stability

Obedience to those in authority leads to economic stability and a smooth life for society. Economic stability, as stated by Professor Dr. Abdul Jabbar Al-Sabhany: "generally refers to avoiding sharp fluctuations in product prices, exchange rates, and export prices, as well as avoiding fluctuations in employment levels, due to the negative effects all of these have on economic activity and social welfare" (Al-Sabhany, n.d.). Meanwhile, Dr. Hazem Mahmoud Al-Wadi says: "Economic stability means the absence of economic crises such as inflation (a continuous rise in the price level), economic recession (a decline in purchasing power), unemployment, and the like" (Al-Wadi, 2013). Such stability contributes to improving the living conditions of citizens, enhancing economic development within the country, and this stability is achieved through obedience to those in authority.

Development and Progress

If the Islamic ummah desires progress and advancement, it must adhere to obedience and loyalty to those in authority. The Prophet PBUH rose among a nation that had no system, no unifying bond, nor any connection that brought them together. He carried the teachings of the Lord of the Worlds in the Noble Qur'an, which is without doubt or uncertainty, ensuring for them the joy of eternal life. Allah aided him and people entered Islam in large groups. He uplifted them with the spirit of the Book of Allah on the path of unity through sound and correct belief. They obeyed the Prophet in matters of their religion and worldly life, and within just over twenty years, that nation experienced a rise in progress and development unparalleled in history (Wajdi, 1967).

Obedience to those in authority in Islamic history has proven its ability to create stability and progress. With a strong and respected leader, the Islamic society can achieve glory in various aspects of life be it political, economic, social, or cultural. This indicates that obedience to the legitimate and responsible leader is one of the key foundations in building an advanced and prosperous civilization.

The Hereafter Benefits of Obeying Those in Authority

Obedience to those in authority has rewards in the Hereafter just as it has benefits in this world, because human life does not end with death in this world, but rather leads to eternal life in the Hereafter. Every deed performed by the children of Adam will be accounted for and recompensed in that eternal abode. The rewards in the Hereafter for obeying those in authority in Islam are many, and include salvation on the Day of Judgment and spiritual rewards.

If we reflect on Allah Almighty's statement regarding the punishment for obeying those in authority in sin, we will understand the rewards for obeying them in righteousness on the Day of Judgment. Allah the Almighty has said: *"On the Day their faces are constantly flipped in the Fire, they will cry, "Oh! If only we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!". And they will say, "Our Lord! We obeyed our leaders and elite, but they led us astray from the Right Way. Our Lord! Give them double our punishment, and condemn them tremendously"* (Al-Ahzab: 66-68). And the verses indicate that obedience to Allah and His Messenger is a means of salvation from the Hellfire. Obedience to those in authority, in what is right, is considered obedience to the Messenger, as stated in his saying: *"...and whoever obeys the leader has indeed obeyed me..."* (Al-Bukhari, 2002).

The verses also indicated that the misguided leaders will be of no benefit to their followers in the Hereafter for having obeyed them, because the followers invoked curses upon the leaders by saying: *"Our Lord! Give them double our punishment, and condemn them tremendously"*, and if they had truly benefited their followers, they would not have asked for double the punishment upon them. Al-Razi said: *"That is, because of their misguidance and leading others astray. In His saying, "double the punishment and curse them with a mighty curse", there is a subtle meaning, which is that supplication is only made when what is being asked for is not already obtained. The punishment had already befallen them, and so had the curse. Thus, they asked for something not yet present an increase in punishment by saying 'double' and an increase in the curse by saying 'a mighty curse' (Al-Razi, 1981). Among the benefits of obeying those in authority on the Day of Judgment is its explanation in the following subsections:*

The Proof Before Allah

Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that the Prophet PBUH said: *"Whoever removes his hand from obedience will meet Allah on the Day of Judgment with no proof (to justify himself)"* (Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, 2006), Al-Nawawi said: *"This means he will have no proof for his action and no excuse that will benefit him"* (Al-Nawawi, 2004). This refers to the absence of any valid argument before Allah Almighty for the one who breaks his covenant and rebels against those in authority, withdrawing from obedience. He will have no excuse for the sins and transgressions he committed. As for those who remain obedient, they will have a proof before Allah Almighty on the Day of Judgment, for fulfilling their duty of

obedience to those in authority in matters that are pleasing to Allah and in accordance with what is right.

The Honor from Allah

The honouring from Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, on the Day of Judgment encompasses His reverence and exaltation of His faithful, obedient, and sincere servants. It includes forms of bliss and honouring that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and has never crossed the mind of any human being. This honouring is one of the benefits of obedience to those in authority. In this regard, the Prophet PBUH said: *“Whoever honours the authority of Allah in this world, Allah will honour him on the Day of Judgment, and whoever humiliates the authority of Allah in this world, Allah will humiliate him on the Day of Judgment”* (Ahmad, 1995). Honouring those in authority in this world is done by obeying them in what is right. Al-Suyuti explained this by saying: *“To dishonour him means to abandon his commands in acts of obedience, and to honour him is to hasten to carry out his commands in obedience to Allah”* (Al-Suyuti, 2012), dishonouring those in authority is by neglecting their commands, while honouring them is by promptly obeying them in that which pleases Allah.

Allah will remain under His shade

Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet PBUH said: *“There are seven (types of people) whom Allah will shade in His shade on the Day when there is no shade except His shade: the just leader...”* (Al-Bukhari, 2002; Muslim, 2006). The Messenger of Allah mentioned seven categories of people from this ummah who will enjoy the shade of Allah the Almighty on the Day of Judgment, a day when no one will find any shade except the shade provided by Allah, that is, the shade of His Throne. The first of these seven is the just leader, meaning a ruler who is fair with those under his care, who safeguards their rights, manages their affairs, and governs them according to the Shari'ah of Allah thereby upholding both religious and worldly interests. As for the obedient followers, they will be gathered along with their just leaders under the shade of Allah the Exalted, as the Prophet PBUH said: *“A person will be with those whom he loves”* (Al-Bukhari, 2002; Muslim, 2006), this hadith shows that people's hearts are connected with one another in this worldly life, and this bond becomes a cause for them to be gathered together in the Hereafter. Obedience in righteousness strengthens the connection between leaders and their followers.

Conclusion, Research Findings and Recommendations

After analyzing the Islamic texts and examining the outcomes resulting from obedience to those in authority, it becomes clear that such obedience is not merely a religious obligation, but rather a fundamental pillar for the stability and advancement of the nation in this world, as well as a means to attain the pleasure of Allah Almighty and the bliss of the Hereafter. The study has concluded with the following results:

- 1- Obeying those in authority in matters of what is right leads to social and political stability, preserves security, unites the ranks, advances the economy, and achieves development and progress.
- 2- Obedience in what is right to those in authority is part of obedience to Allah and His Messenger, as indicated by the texts. It is a means of salvation on the Day of Judgment, of having a valid argument before Allah, of attaining divine honor, and of receiving the shade of the Throne on the Day when there is no shade except His.

- 3- Indeed rebellion against authority causes tribulation and division, and leads to chaos and loss in this world, and regret and punishment in the Hereafter.

Recommendations

- 1- Emphasizing the importance of instilling the concept of legitimate obedience to those in authority in the hearts of Muslims, through educational curricula, sermons, and media programs.
- 2- It is necessary to clarify that obedience is not in sin, but in what is right, and that this principle is what maintains the balance between obedience and oversight.
- 3- Encouraging those in authority to uphold justice and serve the interests of the people, so that they become worthy of obedience and followership, thereby achieving the public good.
- 4- Supporting programs that promote unity and national cohesion under the leadership of those in authority, and warning against calls for division and rebellion.

It becomes clear that obedience to those in authority in Islam is closely linked to the preservation of religion and society, and to achieving happiness in both this world and the Hereafter.

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