***Abandoning Doubtful Things***

***Written by:***

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**(1)**

Al-Nu'man bin Bashir may Allah be pleased with them reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him saying: "What is lawful is clear and what is unlawful is clear, but between them are certain doubtful things which many people do not know. So he who guards against doubtful things keeps his religion and his honor blameless. But he who falls into doubtful things falls into that which is unlawful." (Agreed upon)

Doubtful things means things that it is not agreed whether they are lawful or unlawful; such as things related to earnings, food and others.

Imam Ahmed explained 'doubtful things' that they are a grade between the lawful and the unlawful. He also explained them as mixing between lawful and unlawful.

**(2)**

'Atiyyah Al-Sa'di may Allah be pleased with him reported that the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said: "A person will not reach the status of being one of those who have piety until he refrains from doing something in which there is no sin, for fear of falling into something in which there is sin." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi and others) At-Tirmidhi graded this Hadith as good and Al-Hakim graded it as sound; Al-Dhahaby agreed with him. The transmitted chain of this Hadith is weak.

The meaning of this Hadith is right; it means when a lawful matter is mixed with an unlawful matter, the complete righteousness and perfect piety are to refrain from the lawful, as in this case avoiding the unlawful will not be achieved except through avoiding the lawful; that is the way of pious and righteous people.

**(3)**

Abu Ad-Darda' said: "The perfect piety is that a slave fears Allah, to the extent he fears Him for the weight of an atom, and to the extent he leaves some lawful things fearing that they may be unlawful as this would be a veil between him (the slave) and the unlawful." (Narrated by Nu'aim bin Hammad and Ibn Abi Al-Dunia)

The dutiful piety is to perform dutiful acts and to abandon forbidden acts, even if the forbidden thing is a stick of the Arak (a tooth brush tree).

But the perfect piety is to leave doubtful things, such as trading on things that scholars disagreed upon; whether they are lawful or not.

**(4)**

Allah said: "Verily, the Muttaqeen (the pious and the righteous) (will be) amid gardens and fountains (of clear-flowing water). \* (Their greeting will be): Enter you here in peace and security."

Al-Thawry and others reported that Ibn 'Uyainah said: "They are called the Muttaqeen (pious and righteous) because they abandon matters that it is hard to abandon (out of fear of Allah)."

Al-Hasan said: "The pious and the righteous are still abiding to their piety until they avoided many lawful things fearing falling into unlawful ones."

The pious and the righteous are the ones who make a veil between themselves and Allah's torture by performing dutiful acts and avoiding forbidden ones. The most perfect amongst them are the one who leaves dutiful things that it is suspected whether they are lawful or not.

**(5)**

Ibn 'Umar said: "It is beloved to me to make between me and the unlawful a veil of the lawful and I would not tear out (breach) it."

Maimoon bin Mehran said: "The lawful will not be clear for the man until he makes a veil between him and the unlawful."

It is a sign of piety and pious people to avoid lawful things mixed with unlawful ones as they become doubtful.

**(6)**

Suffian bin 'Uyainah said: "A slave will not reach the reality of Faith until he makes a veil between him and the unlawful, and until he leaves the sin and what is close to it."

The reality of Faith and piety lies on an elevated position and a high rank. No one will reach it except the one who avoids doubtful things that it is not clear whether they are lawful or not.

**(7)**

Abu Hurairah may Allah be pleased with him reported that the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said: "Allah is Good and accepts only that which is good." (Narrated by Muslim)

The good is that which is free from evil; meaning the lawful which is free from the unlawful. The best and the purest good is that which is not mixed with doubtful things.

Ibn Al-Mubarak said: "Returning a Dirham that it is doubtful (whether it is lawful or not) is more beloved to me than giving as a charity one hundred thousand and one hundred thousand … until he counted six hundred thousand Dirhams."

Ibn 'Umar said: "Returning an unlawful Daniq (a coin) is better than spending one hundred thousand for the sake of Allah."

Some ancestors said: "Leaving a Daniq that Allah hates is more beloved to me than performing five hundred Hajjes (Pilgrimages)."

**(8)**

Al-Nu'man bin Bashir reported that the Prophet peace be upon him said: "Whoever forsakes doubtful things lest he may commit a sin, he will definitely avoid what is clearly unlawful; and whoever indulges in these doubtful things bravely, he is likely to commit what is clearly unlawful." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Among legal objectives is to keep away from the unlawful, its reasons and means; such as doubtful things and things in which the lawful and the unlawful are mixed.

Suffian said: Whoever sells an object that it is hateful to trade on it because it is doubtful, he should give its price as a charity. But Ibn Al-Mubarak disagreed with Suffian, saying that such person should give the profit only as a charity, and Ahmed said the same.

**(9)**

Al-Hasan may Allah be pleased with him reported: I remember (these words) from the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him: "Give up what is doubtful to you for that which is not doubtful." (Narrated by Ahmed, Al-Nesai' and At-Tirmidhi, graded as good by At-Tirmidhi)

This Hadith means: Avoid doubtful things that you suspect whether they are lawful or unlawful and things in which the lawful and the unlawful are mixed; for avoiding such things make you fear Allah more and pure your soul.

**(10)**

Wathela bin Al-Asqa' reported that the Prophet said: "The pious is the one who leaves doubtful things." The transmitted chain of this Hadith is weak, but it is agreed upon the authenticity of its meaning.

Al-'Umari said: "If the slave is pious, he will leave what is doubtful to him for that which is not doubtful."

Al-Fudail said: "People claim that piety is hard, but when two matters are exposed to me, I would take the harder. So leave what is doubtful to you for that which is not doubtful."

Hassan said: "Nothing is easier than piety. So when you suspect something, leave it."

**(11)**

'Umar said: "Abandon usury and suspicion; meaning doubtful things to you even if you are not sure that they are usury."

'Atta' Al-Kharasany reported that the Prophet said: "A pious Muslim leaves minor sin fearing of falling into major one."

This Hadith means that he leaves doubtful things; such as that which it is not agreed whether it is lawful or not. A support for Hadith 'Atta' is Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim that Al-Nu'man bin Bashir reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him saying: "He who guards against doubtful things keeps his religion and honor blameless, but he who falls into doubtful things falls into what is unlawful;" meaning that he will fall into the unlawful gradually or he may falls into the unlawful which is mixed with the lawful while he does not know.

**(12)**

Ibn Masood may Allah be pleased with him said: "Why you commit doubtful things while there are four thousand things that are not doubtful to you?!"

The ancestors urged to leave things that you suspect whether they are lawful or not, and to substitute them with clear lawful things that you know from where they came.

Such opinion is reported from a group of the Prophet's companions; such as 'Umar, Ibn 'Umar, Abu Ad-Darda', and other companions, followers and Imams of religion.

**(13)**

'Aisha may Allah be pleased with her said: "Verily, (this life) is just few days, so leave what is doubtful to you." (Narrated by Abdulrazeq)

Abu Ad-Darda' said: "Good is tranquility, and evil is suspicion, so leave what is doubtful to you to what is not doubtful." (Narrated by At-Tabrany)

This means that when you are doubtful whether a matter is lawful or unlawful because there is a strong disagreement about it, or because its lawful and unlawful conditions are mixed, then leave it out of righteousness and piety.

Allah said: "For those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out (from every difficulty)."

**(14)**

Abu Hurairah may Allah be pleased with him reported that the Prophet peace be upon him said: "It is from the excellence of a man's observance of Islam that he should keep away from that which does not concern him." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, graded as good by Al-Nawawi)

Ibn Hajar said: "When a man's observance of Islam is good, he will leave all what he is not concerned about of unlawful, doubtful and disapproved acts. He will also leave extra permissible acts that he is not concerned about. A Muslim is not concerned about all such matters if his Islam is perfect and if he reached the degree of Ihsan (benevolence)."

**(15)**

Suffian said: "Oblige yourself to piety so that Allah will make your reckoning easy, leave what is doubtful to you to what is not doubtful, and repel suspicion with certainty. As a result your religion will be sound and safe." (Narrated by Ibn Abi Al-Dunia)

Piety is a great worship to Allah for the person whose state is straight as he left what is doubtful whether it is lawful or unlawful to get close to Allah.

An example for that is mixed trade that it is doubtful about its permission. Thus when a Muslim avoids it to get away from suspicion and to attain certainty, he has reached a great grade of piety and of abandoning what is doubtful.

**(16)**

Abu Yazeed Al-Faid said: I asked Musa bin A'yan about Allah's saying: "Allah does accept (deeds) from those who are righteous and pious." He (Musa) said: "(Such people) left some lawful things fearing of falling into unlawful. That is why Allah has called them the Muttaqeen (the righteous and pious)."

Musa bin A'yan refers here to perfect piety; that it is to leave doubtful things which lie between the clear lawful and the clear unlawful as there is no evidence that gives preponderance to one of them.

Muhammad bin Al-Mubarak said: I asked a monk: "What is the sign of piety?" He replied: "That is to keep away from doubtful things."

**(17)**

Al-Nu'man bin Bashir may Allah be pleased with him reported that the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said: "Make a veil between you and the unlawful; whoever does this, he keeps his religion and honor blameless." (Narrated by Ibn Heban)

This Hadith shows that piety is achieved by leaving doubtful things; the limits of prohibitions regarding earnings and others, by blocking the means that leads to the unlawful, and by closing the way of the devil in order not to draw the Muslim close to the unlawful.

**(18)**

Hassan bin Abi Senan said: "If you suspects anything, leave it." (Narrated by Ahmed and Abu Na'eem)

Hassan means here things that are doubtful to some people as it is suspected whether such things are lawful or not. Most doubtful things lie in earnings so they should be avoided: If this matter is unlawful, then a person has saved himself from falling into it; and if this matter is lawful, then he will get a reward for leaving it for that purpose.

**(19)**

'Uqbah bin Al-Harith may Allah be pleased with him reported: A black woman came and claimed that she had suckled both of them (i.e. 'Uqbah and his wife). So, he mentioned that to the Prophet peace be upon him who turned his face from him and smiled and said: "How (can you keep your wife), and it was said (that both of you were suckled by the same woman)?" His wife was the daughter of Abu Ihab At-Tamimi. (Al-Bukhari)

This Hadith refers that when there is a considerable saying that prohibits an earning or a deal, and this saying has authentic evidence or a strong defense, then a Muslim shall avoid such deed out of piety because of this strong doubt.

**(20)**

Anas may Allah be pleased with him reported: The Prophet peace be upon him passed by a fallen date and said: "Were it not for my doubt that this (date) might have been given in charity, I would have eaten it." (Agreed upon)

Ahmed narrated that Abdullah bin Amr reported: The Prophet peace be upon him felt hungry one night. It was said to him: "Why you are still awake?" He (the Prophet) said: "I found a fallen date and I ate it. Then I remembered that there were dates that have been given in charity (at our house), and I do not know whether that date is from dates of charity or of my family. That is what makes me awake (till that time)."

This Hadith shows that a person shall be cautious regarding matters related to religion, and he shall keep away from doubtful things that lie between the lawful and the unlawful.

**(21)**

'Udai bin Hatem reported: I said: "O Messenger of Allah, sometimes I send my dog for hunting and find another dog with it, and I do not know which of them caught (the game)." He (the Prophet) said: "Do not eat it, for you have mentioned Allah's Name only on sending your dog and not over the other."

In another narration: "You do not know which (of the two dogs) have killed it (the game)." (Agreed upon)

A person should avoid matters where a doubt whether this matter is lawful or not is equal because of the strength of the suspicion. This Hadith is also evidence on abandoning matters where the lawful and the unlawful are mixed and you cannot distinguish between them.

**(22)**

'Adi bin Hatem said: "I asked the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him about hunting." He said: "When you shoot your arrow, recite the Name of Allah, and if you find it (the arrow) killed (that), then eat, except when you find it fallen into water; for in that case you do not know whether it is water that caused its death or your arrow." (Agreed Upon)

This Hadith shows that when it is doubted whether a matter is lawful or unlawful and evidences for both of them are equal, you shall leave it; that is an example for dutiful piety. An example for recommended piety is what Imam Ahmed said: When a man inherited money from his father, and his father was trading on hateful objects, on that case (it is recommended for the son) to give the amount of the profit as a charity and take the rest.

**(23)**

'Aisha may Allah be pleased with her reported: Sa'd bin Abi Waqas and Abd bin Zam'a disputed with each other over a young boy. Sa'd said: "Messenger of Allah, he is the son of my brother 'Utba bin Abu Waqas as he made it explicit that he was his son. Look at his resemblance." Abd bin Zam'a said: "Messenger of Allah, he is my brother as he was born on the bed of my father from his slave-girl." Allah's Messenger peace be upon him looked at his resemblance and found a clear resemblance with 'Utba. But he said: "He (the young boy) is yours O Abd (bin Zam'a), for the child is to be attributed to one on whose bed it is born, and stoning for a fornicator. Sauda bint Zam'a, O you should observe veil from him." So he did not see Sauda at all. (Agreed Upon)

This Hadith is evidence for avoiding doubtful things and for being cautious regarding matters related to religion and honor when there is a strong accepted doubt, not just obsessions.

**(24)**

Abu Hurairah reported: Al-Hasan bin Ali took one of the dates of the Sadaqa (charity) and put it in his mouth. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said: "Leave it, leave it; do not you know that we do not eat the Sadaqa." (Agreed Upon) In another narration for Muslim: "Sadaqa is not allowed for us."

The Prophet peace be upon him hit the mouth of a young child for putting one date in his mouth, saying: "Leave it, throw it my son." That is because Sadaqa is forbidden for Banu Hashem.

Let the eyes of those who do not abstain from eating unlawful objects, and who do not care about money they took; whether it is lawful or unlawful, let their eyes not sleep.

**(25)**

Jabir reported that the Prophet peace be upon him said: "He will not enter Paradise whose flesh is raised from the unlawful, except that the Fire is more appropriate for it." (Narrated by Ahmed)

The pious keep themselves away from eating unlawful things and from earning doubtful money. Al-Qasim narrated that Abu Bakr had a boy who used to bring his yield for him. Once Abu Bakr forgot to ask the boy from where he had brought the earning, (and he ate from it). (When he remembered, he asked him), whereupon the boy said: "I have forecasted for some people," and this was a lie. Abu Bakr put his hand in his throat and kept vomiting (until what he ate got out).

It was also narrated that 'Umar bin Al-Khatab drank milk, and he found it delicious. He asked the drinker from where he brought the milk. He (the drinker) said: "I passed by camels of charity that were drinking, and I took of their milk. Thereupon, 'Umar put his hand in his throat and vomited it (the milk).

**(26)**

Al-Harith reported that Ali may Allah be pleased with him said about rewards of the king: "They are permissible; for what he gives you from the lawful is more than what he gives you from the unlawful."

Imam Ahmed explained suspicion sometimes as mixing between the lawful and the unlawful.

Ibn Rajab said: Another case that is branched from that is dealing with someone whose money combines between the lawful and the unlawful: If most of his money is unlawful, Ahmed said that you should avoid it except when the unlawful is little or unknown, while our companions disagreed whether it is forbidden or disapproved. But if most of his money is lawful, then it is permissible to deal with him and eat from his money.

**(27)**

On the Day of Khaibar, the Prophet peace be upon him ate of a poisoned roasted sheep that was presented to him by a Jewess. The Prophet and his companions used to deal with Unbelievers and People of the Book, while they knew that they (the Unbelievers and People of the Book) do not avoid all unlawful things.

Ibn Rajab said: Some ancestors permitted to eat from the money of the person whose money contains unlawful things as long as that money is not unlawful on its own (such as wine). It was reported that Ibn Masood was asked about a person who has a neighbor dealing in usury in public and taking evil money with no care, and that neighbor invites his neighbors to food. He (Ibn Masood) said: "Accept his invitation, the good is for you and the sin is for him." (Narrated by Abdulrazeq)

**(28)**

It was reported that Ibn Masood was asked about a person who has a neighbor dealing in usury in public and taking evil money with no care, and that neighbor invites his neighbors to food. He (Ibn Masood) said: "Accept his invitation, the good is for you and the sin is for him."

In another narration, the questioner said: "I know no money for that neighbor except it is evil and unlawful." Ibn Masood said: "Accept his invitation." (Narrated by Abdulrazeq and Hannad)

Ibn Rajab graded this tradition as authentic, and Imam Ahmed too, but he contradicted with this as he narrated from Ibn Masood that he said: "Sin seizes the heart."

Ibn Rajab said: "If most of his money is unlawful, Ahmed said that a person should avoid it except when the unlawful is little or unknown."

**(29)**

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet peace be upon him said: "Certainly a time will come when people will not bother to know from where they earned the money, by lawful means or unlawful means." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

Waheeb said: "Nothing will benefit you until you look at what you put at your stomach, is it lawful or unlawful?" Imam Ahmed said about the profit of the money mixes between lawful and unlawful: "If the money is much, a person should remove the unlawful from it and use the rest. And if the money is little, he should avoid all of it." Ibn Rajab said: "Some of our ancestors considered that such behavior comes out of piety and it is not prohibited to use the whole money whether it is little or much, but after removing the amount of the unlawful from it; that is the saying of Al-Ahnaf and others."

**(30)**

Allah said: "So fear Allah as much as you can."

This verse has relieved what Allah commanded us in His saying: "Fear Allah as He should be feared."

Piety and avoiding doubtful things are measured according to one's ability when the affliction is general. Al-Hasan said: "These earnings have become invalid, so take from it according to your need."

It was narrated from Ibn Sireen that he said about a man who takes his reward from money of usury, Ibn Sireen said that this is permissible. (Narrated by Al-Khalal)

Ibn Rajab said: "When it is known that the essence of an object is unlawful, then it is forbidden to take it." Ibn Abdelbar and others agreed on that. But if it is known that there is a suspicion on that money; whether it is lawful or not, then it is permissible to take from it; that is the saying of Imam Ahmed.

**(31)**

Abu Umamah may Allah be pleased with him reported that the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said: "Allah decrees the (Hell) Fire and forbids Paradise for the one who cuts off the rights of a believer by taking a false oath." One man asked: "O Messenger of Allah, even if it should be for an insignificant thing?" He said: "Even if it be a stick of the Arak tree (i.e. the tree from which Siwak sticks are taken)." (Narrated by Muslim)

It is not permissible to give less intention to little and minor unlawful things, but you shall abstain from insignificant and trivial unlawful things. And regarding things that are not unlawful, a person who is perfectly pious can abstain from insignificant things out of piety. Imam Ahmed was asked about a man who buys herbs and provides not to take the plait that ties them." Imam Ahmed said: "About whom you are asking?" They said: "It is about Ibrahim bin Abi Na'eem." He said: "That is acceptable if it is for Ibrahim bin Abi Na'eem (as he is a pious man)."

**(32)**

Allah said: "Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it!"

It is from good to behave piously regarding tiny things.

Imam Ahmed assigned a man to buy butter for him. The man brought the butter on a paper, and Imam Ahmed ordered to return the paper to the seller. Imam Ahmed did not use to use ink of his companions, but he had an inkwell. Once a man asked his permission to use his ink, Imam Ahmed said to him: "Write, that is hard piety." Another man asked his permission to use his ink, and Imam Ahmed smiled and said: "Neither my piety nor yours reached that (high degree)." Imam Ahmed said that out of his modesty. He used to deny piety on tiny matters from those whose deeds are away from piety.

**(33)**

Bishr bin Al-Harith said: "There are ten men who do not let anything enter their stomach except lawful things, even if they were to eat dust and ash: Suffian Al-Thawry, Ibrahim bin Adham, Suliman Al-Khawas, Ali bin Fudail, Yusuf bin Asbat, Abu Mu'awyah Najeeh Al-Khadem, Hudhaifah bin Qatadah Al-Mar'ashi, Dawood At-Tai', Wuhaib bin Al-Ward, and Fudail bin 'Iyad."

An example for their perfect piety is what reported about a man who said: I accompanied Al-Thawry to Makkah. We passed by a man where we sought shade of his tree and drank from his water. Then Suffian asked him about his affair. The man said that people give him reward for letting them be shaded and drink. Upon hearing so, Suffian vomited until his soul was about to get out, and he sat under the sun.

**(34)**

Al-Hasan Al-Basry said: "Seeking lawful matters is harder than meeting enemies at the battle."

With the praise of Allah, lawful earnings are available and plentiful. They are easy for those whom Allah facilitates their means for them. But some people reached a very high and hard level of piety. Yazeed bin Zurai' refused to take five hundred thousand that was his heritage.

It was reported that Al-Fudail had a sheep that ate an insignificant thing from the feed of some princes, so he (Al-Fudail) did not drink from its milk after that.

It was said to Ibrahim bin Adham: "Will you not drink from Zamzam water?" He said: "If I had a bucket, I would drink." He abstained from using the bucket that the king has put.

Examples for perfect piety of ancestors at all affairs are countless.

**(35)**

Na'eem reported: 'Umar used to give his wife perfume that belongs to all Muslims in order to sell it. Once something of the perfume stuck on her finger, and she wiped it with her veil. 'Umar said to her: "You used perfume of the Muslims!" Then he took out her veil, put it on the dust and poured water over it.

Yunus reported: Spoils of perfume were taken to 'Umar bin Abdelazeez. He put his hand on his nose (in order not to smell the perfume). It was said to him: "O Commander of the Faithful, you hold your breath for that?" He said: "I hate to smile it while other Muslims will not (as it is for all Muslims)." Usaid reported that the Prophet peace be upon him said: "After me you will see others given preference to you, but you should remain patient till you meet me at the Haud (Lake of Kauthar in Paradise)." (Agreed Upon)