

315492 - He is heedless about sins, on the grounds that the Sahaabah also committed sins

the question

Some of the Sahaabah committed some major sins, although their faith was stronger than ours. Does this mean that it is more likely that we will commit major sins, because our faith is weaker than their faith? Or is this analogy invalid? How should we respond to one who commits major sins and says that the Sahaabah also committed major sins?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Such talk stems from the deceit of the Shaytaan, by means of which he makes sins seem insignificant to people, so that they will get carried away in sin and not repent from it.

This notion is false on several counts:

-1- The perfect example for the Muslim is the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often” [al-Ahzaab 33:21].

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This verse is an important principle, which is following the example of the Messenger of Allah

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(blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in his words, deeds and character. Hence Allah commanded the people to follow the example of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) on the day of al-Ahzaab, in terms of his patience, steadfastness, perseverance, striving in jihad and awaiting help and support from his Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, and may Allah send blessings and peace upon him constantly until the Day of Judgement.

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (6/391).

By the same token, we must adhere to what he brought of commands and prohibitions.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty” [al-Hashr 59:7].

Whoever goes against his prohibitions has failed to achieve the level of piety (taqwa) that is required of him, and he has exposed himself to the punishment of Allah, may He be exalted.

-2- The Muslim is enjoined to follow the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) in their good deeds, and not otherwise.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhajireen and the Ansar and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment” [at-Tawbah 9:100].

Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi said:

“and those who followed them with good conduct” - this is an condition that is required of those

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who follow them, which is that they should follow them in their good deeds and not their bad deeds. End quote.

See: ad-Durr al-Manthoor (4/272) and Tafseer al-Baghawi (4/88).

So the Muslim should strive to follow the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) in their good deeds, so that he may be included among the people mentioned in the verse quoted above. As for any errors that they (may Allah be pleased with them) made, we are not enjoined to follow them in that.

Among the good deeds of theirs in which the Muslim should follow their example is the fact that if they made any mistakes, they would hasten to repent, and their repentance was so great and sincere that Allah erased their sins thereby. The hadiths that speak of that are very well known, such as the repentance of Maa'iz and of the Ghaamidi woman (may Allah be pleased with them).

So the Muslim should strive to obey Allah, may He be exalted, and to keep away from disobeying Him. Then if he slips up, he must hasten to repent sincerely and not try to excuse himself by referring to the mistakes made by some of the Sahaabah, because they would repent and they would not persist in sin.

-3- Even though some of the Sahaabah committed some major sins, that did not happen very often; in fact it was rare. In most cases, they (may Allah be pleased with them) adhered to the command of Allah and strove hard to attain His pleasure. So why would this person referred to in the question ignore what was usually the case with the actions of the Sahaabah, and try to use that which rarely happened as an excuse?

Moreover, if he is sincere, then let him do what they did: they used to hasten to repent, and they did not persist in sin, as noted above.

Then let him follow the example of the one who surrendered her life for the sake of Allah, and

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[admitted the sin of adultery] so that the hadd punishment would be carried out on her.

Then let him follow their example with regard to worship, attitude, effort, striving, acts of charity, fasting and voluntary prayers at night.

In his attitude and actions, let this poor man strive to emulate the attitude and actions of the Sahaabah.

Then let him see, in that case, whether the Shaytaan will try to entice him with such notions!

And Allah knows best.