

Conditions of Enjoining the Good and Forbidding Evil

Conditions under Which Enjoining the Good and Forbidding Evil Becomes Obligatory

Q 1: What is the rule if enjoining the good and forbidding evil compromises the dignity of someone who fails to carry out an obligatory act or perpetrates a prohibited act, and humiliates him before the people?

A: If one observes the conditions and etiquette of enjoining the good and forbidding evil and does not transgress their limits, it is no problem.

Q 2: Is it a governmental ordinance or a fatwā that under the Islamic state the people's duty with respect to enjoining the good and forbidding evil is limited to oral enjoining and forbidding and the other grades are the responsibility of the authorities?

A: It is a jurisprudential fatwā.

Q 3: Is it permissible to forbid evil without the permission of the ruler when stopping someone from perpetrating evil depends on hitting him, imprisoning him, putting him to hardship, or on entering in / using his properties even if it leads to their destruction?

A: There are different situations and cases. Generally speaking, the different grades of enjoining the good and forbidding evil, so long as they do not affect the life or property of the perpetrator of the evil, do not require anybody's permission and are obligatory up on all mukallafs. But if enjoining the good and forbidding evil involve measures beyond oral enjoining and forbidding and it is in a country ruled by an Islamic government and system that has taken charge of this Islamic responsibility, the matter will depend on the Leader's permission or that of the relevant authorities, the local police force and righteous courts.

Q 4: If forbidding evil with respect to very important matters, such as protecting the life of a 'respected person' [i.e., to exclude the life of a murderer and the like], cannot be performed except through violence, such as hitting which may cause injury or occasionally even killing of the assailant, will the permission of the authorized religious authority be required?

A: If saving life of a 'respected person' and preventing murder depends on immediate and direct intervention, it is permissible and even obligatory according to Islamic law, because it is considered defense of a 'respected person'. This obligation neither requires the authorized religious authority's permission nor depends on obtaining any order to that effect. However, if defending a 'respected person' depends on killing the assailant, there are different cases whose rulings may differ as well.

Q 5: Is it obligatory for someone who wants to enjoin another person to the good or forbid him from evil to have the power to carry it out? When is it obligatory to enjoin someone to the good and forbid him from evil?

A: Whoever enjoins and forbids must know what the good and evil are and knows that the wrongdoer commits them intentionally and without any shar'ī excuse. It is obligatory to enjoin the good and forbid evil only when it is likely to be effective and one is secure from harm in doing it, considering the extent of the expected harm and the importance of the

good or evil in question. Otherwise, it is not obligatory for him.

Q 6: If one of our relatives carelessly commits sins, what is our duty with respect to keeping relations with him?

A: If you think that cutting relations may make your relative refrain from sins, it will be obligatory for you to do so to enjoin the good and forbid evil; otherwise, it is not permissible to break ties of kinship with blood relatives.

Q 7: Is it permissible to neglect enjoining the good and forbidding evil for fear of losing one's job, e.g. the head of an educational institution, who deals with the university youth, commits actions against the sharī'ah or paves the way for commission of sins in that place while we fear of losing our job if we forbid him from evil?

A: As a general rule, if the mukallaf fears considerable harm for himself in enjoining the good and forbidding evil, it will not be obligatory for him.

Q 8: If the good is neglected and evil is common in some academic environments and the conditions for enjoining the good and forbidding evil are there, will one be relieved of performing this duty if he is single?

A: When there is a case to enjoin the good and forbid evil and the required conditions are available, it is the sharī', as well as social and human obligation of all mukallafs to do so. Such things as being married / unmarried, does not change the ruling. Merely being unmarried does not exempt one from carrying out this obligation.

Q 9: If one comes across evidence of sinful conduct, impropriety and insincerity of a person holding a powerful position so that one fears his power and influence, is it permissible to neglect enjoining the good and forbidding evil in relation to him? Or is it obligatory for one to call him to the good and forbid him from evil even when one is afraid of his harm?

A: If there is a reasonable fear of harm, it will not be obligatory to enjoin the good and forbid evil, rather you will be relieved of the obligation. But it is not good for someone to neglect reminding and advising his brother in faith, simply for fear of the position of the person who neglects the good or that of the perpetrator of the evil, or for the mere likelihood of some harm inflicted by them.

Q 10: At times forbidding a sinner creates negative feelings against Islam due to his ignorance of Islamic duties and rules. On the other hand, if we leave him alone, it will prepare the ground for others to corrupt the environment and commit sins. What is the duty in such a situation?

A: Enjoining the good and forbidding evil — when their conditions are available — are considered public religious duties for the sake of safeguarding Islamic laws and social health. The mere suspicion that it might create negative feelings against Islam in some individuals does not justify the negligence of such an extremely crucial duty.

Q 11: If those assigned by the government to prevent corruption do not accomplish their duty well, is it permissible for people to take charge of this duty themselves?

A: It is not permissible for other people to interfere with the affairs assigned to judicial and security authorities. However, there is no objection to enjoining the good and forbidding evil when carried out with due observance of their limits and conditions.

Q 12: With regard to enjoining the good and forbidding evil, should individuals confine themselves to the oral level of enjoining and forbidding? Limiting the obligation to oral reminding contradicts with what is stated in the books on Practical Laws of Islam, particularly the Tahrīr al-Wasīlah. And if they are allowed, when necessary, to advance to the other grades, will it be permissible for

them, at times of necessity, to carry out all the graded levels mentioned in the book of Tahrīr al-Wasīlah?

A: Considering that under an Islamic government the grades subsequent to oral enjoining the good and forbidding evil are delegated to security and judicial authorities, particularly with respect to cases where prevention of evil entails exertion of force, handling the assets of the wrongdoer, exercising ta'zīr against him, his detention, or the like, it is obligatory for the mukallafs to confine themselves to oral enjoining and forbidding and, when the need arises for the use of force, to refer the case to the police and judicial authorities. This does not contradict the fatwā of the late Imam Khomeini (q.) in this regard. But, when and where the Islamic government is not dominant, it is obligatory for the mukallafs — when the conditions are available — to go through all grades of enjoining the good and forbidding evil — with the observation of their sequence — until its purpose is realized.

Q 13: Some bus drivers play singing and music cassettes of ḥarām kinds, without paying any attention to advice and exhortations to turn off their cassette players. Please explain the rules to be followed in such situations and for dealing with such persons. Is it permissible to be rough with them?

A: If the conditions for forbidding evil exist, you are not liable to more than oral forbidding. In case this forbidding is not effective, it is obligatory to avoid listening to unlawful music and singing. However, if unlawful music and singing reach your ears involuntarily, you are liable to nothing.

Q 14: I work in a hospital in the sacred profession of nursing. Occasionally, during my work I encounter some patients who listen to cassettes of unlawful and degenerate music. I advise them twice to stop it. And if it does not work, I take the cassette out of the player, erase its content, and then return it to its owner. Please explain if such conduct is permissible?

A: It is permissible to erase the perverse contents to prevent the cassettes to be used in a ḥarām way provided it is done with the permission of the cassettes' owners or the authorized religious authority.

Q 15: The sound of music cassettes of uncertain permissibility is heard from some houses and is at times with such high volume that it is troublesome for the believers. What is one's duty in this regard?

A: To break into people's houses is not permissible. Besides, enjoining the good and forbidding evil depends on the identification of the actual instance and the existence of certain conditions.

Q 16: What is the rule of enjoining and forbidding with respect to women with inadequate ḥijāb? What is the rule when one fears that oral forbidding may cause unlawful sexual feelings?

A: Forbidding evil does not depend on looking questionably at a non-maḥram female, and it is obligatory for every mukallaf to avoid ḥarām deeds, especially when carrying out the duty of forbidding evil.

Q 17: What is the duty of a son toward his parents or that of a wife toward her husband when they do not pay khums on their assets? Are they allowed to use the assets on which khums has not been paid leading to the assets to be mixed with ḥarām, considering many traditions in which it is emphasized to avoid such properties as they contaminate the soul?

A: They (the son and the wife) should enjoin the good and forbid the evil whenever they see the parents or the husband neglecting the good or committing the evil provided that the



دفتر مقام معظم رهبری
www.leader.ir

conditions for carrying them out exist. As for using their wealth, there is no problem in it.