

On Bondage to Allah

'Obudiyyat

Once Hazrat Abdullah Bin Umar (*Radhi Allahu Anhum*) was passing through the wilderness, outside Al-Madinah with his companions. They had their lunch pack with them. At lunch time, the sheet was spread and they all sat down to eat. At that moment, a young herdsman, who was grazing sheep nearby, approached them and saluted them. Hazrat Abdullah (*Radhi Allahu Anhu*) said "welcome. Please eat with us". He replied gravely that he was fasting. Hazrat Abdullah (*Radhi Allahu Anhu*) was bemused at his reply. He said: "You are grazing sheep in the wilderness in this heat. How come you are fasting?" Then he thought of testing the honesty of the young man. He asked him, "Can you sell me one of your sheep? I'll pay you handsomely and also give you some flesh for *iftar*."

"These are my master's sheep, not mine," the young man replied gravely.

To test his integrity further, Hazrat Abdullah (*Radhi Allahu Anhu*) tipped, "Just tell your master that the sheep was taken away by a wolf."

Hearing this, the young man became red-faced and moved away. Raising his index finger towards the sky he chanted, "What answer shall I give to Allah? What answer shall I give to Allah?"

Hazrat Abdullah (*Radhi Allahu Anhu*) was moved by this scene. He kept repeating the words of the herdsman and wept.

Coming back to Madinah, he bought the slave along with the sheep from the owner and set him free.

The moral of this story is that a true believer is always conscious of omniscience and omnipresence of Allah. He desists from committing sins and avoids abominable acts with full conviction that his Creator is seeing and hearing him all the time. Thus, the bond between a believer and Allah is awfully delicate.

At one end, is the Creator of the universe who is aloof from his creatures and on the other end are His poor and needy bondsmen entirely dependent on Him. It is, therefore, essential to describe the norms that govern the conduct behooving the majesty of the Creator and befitting the status of His humble bondsmen:

1. **The** believer must keep clean of the pollution of *shirk billah* [ascribing co-partners to Allah]. He must devote himself solely to the obedience of Allah, believe in him as his sole Creator and hold Him alone as worthy of worship and devotion. *Allah (Ta'ala)* has proclaimed:

﴿وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا﴾ النساء: ٣٦

Translation of Meaning: "And serve Allah. Ascribe nothing as partner unto Him" [An- Nisa: 36].

2. **It** is essential that one must be earnest in his worship and devotion to Allah. Sincerity is the basic condition for acceptance of deeds before Allah. Thus, whatever is done not from the motive of seeking the pleasure of Allah, but from extraneous motives like hypocrisy, ostentatiousness, or extravagance, etc. will not be accepted by Him. This has been laid bare in the following verse:

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾ الكهف: ١١٠

Translation of Meaning: "And whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord let him do righteous work, and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord" [Al-kahf: 110].

3. **A believer** must always tremble before the awe of Allah as He is the Being who sees all and hears all and knows even the secrets kept in the bosom. Thus, a Muslim devotee is always ready both in public and in private to obey His commands and desist from disobedience. Once the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was queried about the meaning of *Ihsan* [doing something to utmost perfection]. He replied:

« أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ » (متفق عليه)

Translation : "It means that you should worship Allah as if you are seeing Him before your eyes. Even if you cannot see Him, [believe] that He is seeing you." [Unanimously narrated].

4. **A believer** must always seek succour from Allah only. It is his conviction that whatever Allah wants to grant nobody can deny and whatever is denied by Allah cannot be granted by anybody. He is omniscient. Therefore, one must beg from Allah alone and seek succour from Him alone. The divine teaching in this respect is:

﴿قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكُ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ آل عمران: ٢٦

Translation of Meaning: "Say: O Allah! Owner of sovereignty! Thou gives dominium unto whom Thou wilt, and Thou withdraws dominium from whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good. Lo! Thou art able to do all things" [Al Imran: 26)].

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has advised:

« وَإِذَا سَأَلْتَ، فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ، فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ »

Translation: "If you need to beg, do beg from Allah alone and if you need succor, seek succour from Allah alone."

5. A believer has the love of Allah alone. This love makes him loyal and obedient to Him. Thus Allah (Ta'ala) has proclaimed:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ﴾ البقرة: ١٦٥

Translation of Meaning: "Those who have embraced faith are the most steadfast in their love of Allah [Al-Baqarah: 165].

6. **Compliance** with ordinances of Allah becomes his second nature. He hastens to act on hearing the commands of Allah. Likewise he runs away from things which are prohibited. He neither takes the divine commands lightly nor slackens in their execution. He knows well that the wherewithal of *Taqwah* [piety] can be garnered only by perseverance in obedience. Allah (Ta'ala) proclaims:

﴿وَمَنْ يُعْظَمِ شَعْبَكَرَ اللَّهُ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ﴾ الحج: ٣٢

Translation of Meaning: "Those who follow the norms of Allah so certainly it is a matter of piety of hearts." [Al-Hajj: 32].

7. A believer can never countenance the transgression of the limits set by Allah. Thus, whenever he sees that somebody is committing a sin or insisting committing a sin, his faith exhorts him to come forward and stop the transgression. He cannot tolerate the denigration of the religion of Allah or speak evil of His Book or commit impudence in respect of the Messenger of

Allah (ﷺ). All such acts provoke his anger and he tries his best to put an end to them and frightens the wrong-doers of the wrath of Allah.

8. **A believer** reposes his trust in Allah alone (*Tawakkul* 'alallah). Allah has proclaimed:

﴿ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ ﴾ الفرقان: ٥٨

Translation of Meaning: "O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), And trust thou in the Living One Who dieth not " [Al-Furqan: 58]. In another place it is proclaimed:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِّغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا ﴾ الطلاق: ٣

Translation of Meaning: "And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him. Lo! Allah brings His command to pass. Allah hath set a measure for all things "[At-Talaq: 3].

Addressing his companions the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) explained the meaning of *Tawakkul* [trust in God] in these words:

"لو أنكم توكّلون على الله حقّ توكّله لرزقكم كما يرزق الطير، تغدوا خماصاً وتروخ بطاناً" (ترمذي)

Translation: "If you trust in Allah as you ought to, He will feed you like He feeds the birds who go out in the morning with empty bellies and come back in the evening with full bellies." [Tirmidhi].

9. **A believer** has to submit himself to the will of Allah. This is the requirement of his faith as well as a practical manifestation of this faith. He never complains against Allah whatever misfortunes befall him. He truly submits to divine predetermination [*Qadha*]. Allah (*Ta'ala*) has proclaimed:

﴿ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴾ البقرة: ١٥٥ - ١٥٧

Translation of Meaning: "And surely, We shall try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and crops; but give glad tidings to the steadfast [Al-Baqarah: 155-157]. Moreover: "Who say, when a misfortune strikes them: Lo! We are Allah's and lo! Unto Him we shall

return (156). Such are they on whom are blessings from their Lord, and mercy. Such are the rightly- guided." [Al-Baqarah: 157].

- 10. A true** believer swears only by Allah. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has pronounced:

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَنْهَاكُمْ أَنْ تَحْلِفُوا بِآبَائِكُمْ ، فَمَنْ كَانَ حَالِفًا فَلْيَحْلِفْ بِاللَّهِ أَوْ لِيَسْكُتْ"
(متفق عليه)

Translation: "Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, forbids you from swearing by your fathers. So if any one of you wants to swear he should swear only by Allah or else he should keep silent." [unanimously narrated].

- 11.** A believer is always grateful to Allah because he knows that all bounties are endowed by Him. Therefore, one must be grateful to Him keeping in view this Quranic proclamation:

﴿لَنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ﴾ **إبراهيم: ٧**

Translation of Meaning: " If ye give thanks, I shall give you more; but if ye are thankless, lo! My punishment is dire" [Ibrahim: 7].

- 12. Repentance**, turning to and orientation to Allah is the way of a believer. Allah proclaims:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ﴾ **التحریم: ٨**

Translation of Meaning: "O ye who believe! Turn unto Allah in sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will remit from you your evil deeds and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, on the day when Allah will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him. Their light will run before them and on their right hands: they will say: Our Lord! Perfect our light for us, and forgive us! Lo! Thou art able to do all things." [At-Tahreem: 8].

Elsewhere it is proclaimed:

﴿وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ **النور: ٣١**

Translation of Meaning: "And turn unto Allah [all of you] together, O believers, in order that ye may succeed" [An-Nur: 31].

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) pronounced:

"يا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ تُوبُوا إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ فَإِنِّي أَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ فِي الْيَوْمِ مِائَةً مَرَّةً" (مسلم)

Translation: "O folk! Repent before your Creator because I myself repent before Him 100 times a day." [Muslim].

Such are the ordinances and commandments that must be followed by a Muslim in order to consolidate his relationship with Allah. He is full of gratitude on enjoying His bounties; he is abashed at the very thought of wrong-doing; in his repentance he is absolutely sincere towards Allah; he has full trust and confidence in Allah; he is afraid of His retribution and hopeful of His forgiveness and mercy; he is used to forbearance and perseverance; he is always busy in invoking the memory of Allah; he eschews taking false oaths; he seeks succor from Allah and Allah alone; in short, he is oriented to and concentrated upon Allah all the time.

The above are some of the requirements without fulfilling which nobody can ever enjoy the blessings of his bondage to Allah.
