

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ
شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ
لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

All Praise be to **اللَّهُ** .

We praise him and ask him for help and forgiveness. We ask him for protection from the evilness within ourselves and from our own bad deeds. Whom-so-ever God guides to the truth no one can lead astray, and whom-so-ever He leaves misguided, no one has the power to guide.

I testify that there is no God but **اللَّهُ** to whom there is no partner and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example for the one whose hope is with Allah and the final day and remembers Allah much” (S33, A21)



الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ
أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

***“This day those who disbelieve are in despair of your ‘Deen’; so fear them not but fear Me!
This day I have perfected your ‘Deen’ for you and completed My favour upon you, and have
chosen for you Islam as “the way of living” (S5, A3)***

To me, this is one of the pivotal ayahs that define the way I need to understand Islam. Those who reject faith are in despair of Islam as a way of life. I need to fear Allah and no one else. The Islamic way of life has been perfected by the creator and has been granted to us as a blessing from Allah. A very assertive ayah indeed.

In a previous khutbah, we came across ayah 7 from surat Al-Ma’eda:

وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيثَاقَهُ الّذِي وَآثَقْتُمْ بِهِ إِذْ
قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٧﴾

***“And remember Allah's favour upon you and remember His covenant by which He has bound
you when you said: We hear and we obey; And keep your duty to Allah. For Allah Knows
what is within your hearts” (S5, A7)***

We the believers have taken a binding oath with Allah when we openly declared: “we hear and we obey”. In this declaration, the term **obey** is a very defining one. Obedience to Allah should be the definition of the believer. In simple terms, you cannot state that you are a believer while at the same time you wilfully disobey Allah(SWT). Wilfully believing and wilfully disobeying simply do not go hand in hand. It is also interesting that the declaration states: “we hear and we obey”. Muslims are not asked to obey blindly, but we first listen, understand and appreciate what the commands are. That is when we exercise wilful obedience.

How should we therefore understand the meaning of “obedience”? Scholars have summarised this for us and in simple terms, obedience to Allah means three things:

1. To carry out the obligations ordained by Allah(SWT).
2. To avoid what Allah(SWT) has forbidden.
3. To stop at the limits decreed by Allah(SWT).

When one works within these parameters, he or she is being obedient.

However, even though we need to understand the commands of Allah(SWT), the basis of achieving obedience rests with the facts that one truly believes in Allah, one truly fears Allah, one truly rests their hope with Allah and one truly feels that Allah(SWT) is ever watching all affairs.

There is no point in obeying what you do not believe in. There is no point obeying what you do not fear. There is no point obeying when there is no reward and there is no point obeying if you think no one can catch you out. These are simple parameters to test our understanding of obedience.

Now comes the difficult one. We all know that we are, to a lesser or greater extent, disobedient. So we need to ask ourselves these four serious questions:

1. When I am being disobedient is it because I do not believe in Allah(SWT)?
2. Is it that I do not fear Allah(SWT)?
3. Is it that I do not think that there is a reward from Allah(SWT)?
4. Or is it that I think Allah(SWT) is not watching me?

The truth is that it is none of that, but somehow we still disobey. We do not carry out all our obligations ordained by Allah, we do not avoid what Allah has forbidden and we transgress the limits decreed by Allah. Why is that? The answer is most likely our basic human nature is letting us down. It is definitely not our belief. For some, it is probably partly to do with our understanding of the commands, but for most of us it is our basic human nature. This I think is where our biggest struggle lies. The struggle between being obedient and being disobedient lies within us.

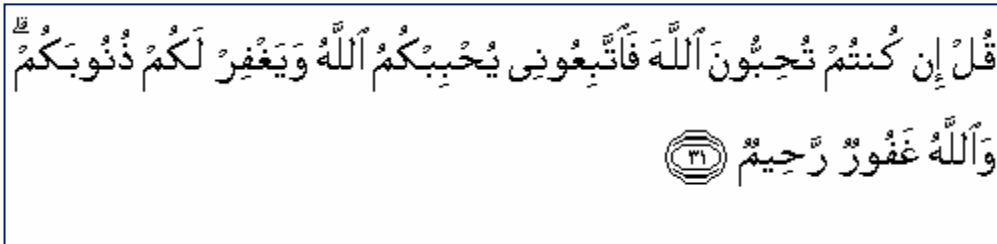
Imam Ghazali said: He who claims four attributes without submitting to four applications has indeed lied: He who claims to love paradise but does not apply himself to obedience has lied. He who claims to love the Prophet(SAAWS) but does not love the scholars and the poor has lied. He who claims to fear the fire of hell but does not relinquish disobedience has lied. And he who claims to love Allah(SWT) but continues to complain about his afflictions has lied.

It is very interesting when we hear how Imam Ghazali, may Allah grant him mercy, has coined four claims with four actions. It is as if Imam Ghazali is saying that to substantiate one's claim, there needs to be material evidence. Otherwise, the claim is false. What Imam Ghazali said hundreds of years ago remain true, we are all lying to ourselves in one way or another. We make claims that we do not substantiate.

We all claim that we love Allah, we love the Prophet(SAAWS), we love paradise and we fear hell fire. But, when it comes to action, we have difficulty being true to what we claim?

Our fight as Muslims does not lie in believing, but it lies in applying our belief. For us, to substantiate our claims and to become better at obeying Allah(SWT), we probably need to define to ourselves what our love of Allah(SWT) means to us.

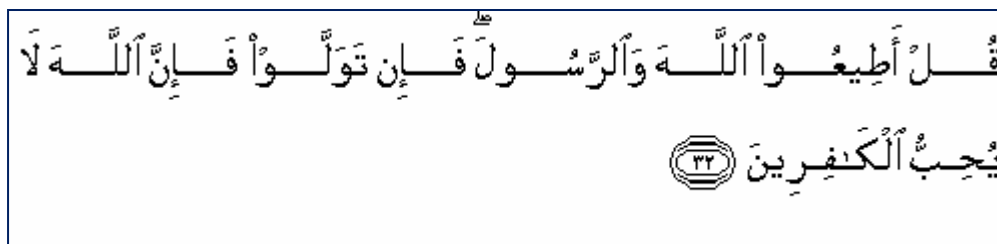
Al-Hassan(PBU) said that people claimed to the Prophet(SAAWS) that they love Allah(SWT), so this verse in Surat Al-Imran was revealed:



“Say: If you do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful” (S3, A31)

“If you love Allah, follow me”.

And then the next ayah states:



“Say: Obey Allah and His Messenger”: But should they turn away, then surely Allah does not love those who reject Faith” (S3, A32)

In simple terms, our love for Allah(SWT) and for the Prophet(SAAWS) must be substantiated with our obedience to Allah(SWT) and to the Prophet(SAAWS). If not, then our claim of love to Allah and to the Prophet is a false claim.

Praise be to Allah, the matter has even been made very simple for us. As believers, we really have no choice. We do not have to procrastinate about being obedient. We are asked to just get on with it.

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ
الْخَيْرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾

“When a matter has been decreed by Allah and His Messenger, it is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, to exercise their own choice in that matter: And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has surely strayed off” (S33, A36)

In saheeh Bukhari, the Prophet(SAAWS) said: “all my ummah will enter paradise except the one who refuses to enter. The companions asked: Oh messenger of Allah, and who would refuse? He replied: the one who obeys me enters paradise, and the one who disobeys me, then he has refused”.

In Surat Al-Ahzab, we come across two ayahs relevant to obedience, ayahs 36 and 71. When we compare the ending of these two ayahs, the issue of obedience becomes much clearer:

وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾

“And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has surely strayed off” (S33, A36)

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾

“And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger; he has surely attained the greatest victory” (S33, A36)

Do we need to know any more? Both ayahs are in Surat 33, Surat Al-Ahzab. This Surat delivers many verses on human interactions, conduct and behaviour. It also delivers verses relating the campaign of Qureish (Ghazwat Al-Ahzab), to annihilate the Muslims with one big congregation of all those against the Prophet(SAAWS) and the believers. Ten thousand warriors descended on Madina, and the fear of the companions when they witnessed this scene was clearly described in this Surat, but so was their resolve.

This Surat is a very revealing one, and to contain these two verses is simply amazing. But, what is most amazing is the fact that this Surat also contains one of the most repeated ayahs about conduct:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
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أقول قولي هذا وأستغفر الله لي و لكم

2nd Khutbah:

الحمد لله ثم الحمد لله. الحمد لله نستعينه ونستغفره ، ونعوذ بالله من شرور
أنفسنا وسيئات أعمالنا . أما بعد :

Brothers and sisters, in the previous khutbahs, we spoke mainly about the transition from being a Muslim to becoming a Mou'men; a believer. We spoke about the characteristics of Iman and the character of the believer. We mentioned issues to do with belief, with worship and with conduct. However, in this transition, something has to happen, and in a way, it was always going to come down to one simple fact: **do we obey or do we disobey?**

We mentioned in a previous khutbah that even sheitan believes that there is one God; Allah(SWT). Sheitan believes that there is a day of judgment, and sheitan believes that there is paradise and that there is hell. All this believing has done him no good whatsoever because he chose to disobey:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ
مِنَ الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

“And We said to the angels: Prostrate to Adam. And they all prostrated except Ibliss: he refused to obey and was arrogant with pride. He was of those who reject Faith” (S2, A34)

Brothers and sisters, obedience is the cornerstone of a strong faith. We need to train ourselves to upgrade our level of obedience. Each and every one of us has a strong obedience point, and each and every one of us has a weak obedience point.

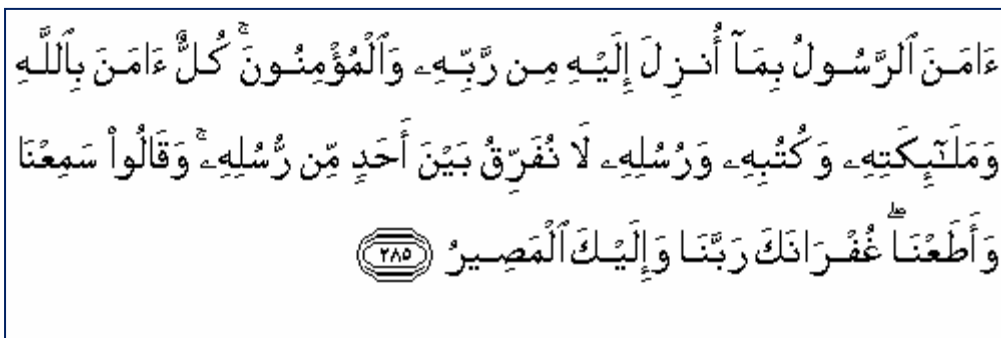
I recently came across an interesting term which is familiar to those who are involved in strategic planning for the future. As Muslims, we need to have a strategy that defines how we are going to better our level of obedience. This term is SWOT: these are the initials for the four words: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Let us take some examples: if for instance you are a Muslims who is having difficulty keeping to all prayers on time, what should you do? If you are a sister that is having a problem keeping to the hijab, what should you do? If you are a Muslim that is having a problem with parking, what should you do, and so on.

Essentially, you need to define for yourself an aspect of obedience that you are having a problem with. Once you have done so, you need to make a strong and purposeful plan to change yourself. It is a strategic plan. It is not an overnight plan, but it is a long term plan. You do not want to do what is know as “fire fighting” for a few days, only to find that it is far too difficult for you to keep on with.

This is where the concept of SWOT comes in. The Muslim should be clever and should use all that is available to him or her. We all have strengths, and we all have weaknesses. We need to take some time out, sit down and put on paper what you think your strong points are, and also be honest enough to figure out what your weaknesses are. You may decide to do this individually or as a group. Then figure out for yourselves what opportunities do you have at your disposal to help you overcome a certain aspect of disobedience. But then, you also need to figure out what are the threats that are allowing you to persist with a certain act of disobedience.

These are all well established strategies to plan a strategic change in ones life. If this means that you need to go on Hajj again, so be it. If it means you need to attend a study circle or join a group so be it. I do not have answers for you because I still have to come up with answers for myself. We are all in the same boat. We all need to better our level of obedience to Allah.



“The messenger and the believers do believe in that which has been revealed unto him from his Lord. Each one believes in Allah, His angels, His scriptures and His messengers - We make no distinction between any of His messengers - and they (the believers, “us”) say: We hear, and we obey. (Grant us) Your forgiveness, our Lord. Unto You is the destiny” (S2, A285)

I ask Allah(SWT) to make us of those who say “we hear and we obey”.