

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## ***WE ARE, YET WE ARE NOT!***

Free. Are we really free? Consider the *hadith* of Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*:

تعس عبد الدينار وعبد الدرهم وعبد الخميصة إن أعطي رضي وإن لم يعط سخط

*May the slave of the gold coin, silver coin and the shawl perish!*

*He is happy if he receives but unhappy if he does not.<sup>1</sup>*

Slaves of gold, silver and stylish clothes . . . Is this not a true description of most people in the world today? Slaves of rands, dollars and pounds, slaves of our businesses and jobs, slaves of our appearances . . . slaves of the material world! So, are we really free? Should I say, 'Free, but not'?

Consider another *hadith* of Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*:

الدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ ، وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ

*The dunya is the prison of the Believer and the paradise of the unbeliever.<sup>2</sup>*

We implore Allah for protection from rejection of any *hadith* because it *defies logic*. People sometimes question the veracity of this *hadith*. 'Look around you' they exclaim, 'so many affluent Muslims and thousands of non-Muslims living in abject poverty. Are affluent Muslims not enjoying a type of worldly

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<sup>1</sup> Saheeh-ul-Bukhaari, Hadith 2730

<sup>2</sup> Saheeh Muslim, Hadith 7606

paradise? On the other hand, is suffering and misery heavenly?’ This question was posed to one of Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*’s grandsons. ‘You have not understood the meaning of the hadith’ he replied, ‘It’s meaning is that in comparison to the luxuries of Jannah, the life of a Believer – no matter how wealthy he may be – is comparable to a prison. Worldly luxury and comfort are incomparable to the bounties that await the Believer in Jannah. On the other hand, the worldly suffering and misery of unbeliever are incomparable to the suffering and misery of the inhabitants of Jahannam. Thus, the worldly difficulty of the unbeliever is always a *paradise* in comparison to what awaits him in Jahannam.’

Besides, comparison of one thing to another does not demand equality between the two in every aspect. For example, a brave man is often called a lion. This does not mean that he walks on fours, has a tail, smelly mouth and a thunderous roar like a lion. The comparison is only in bravery. Likewise, comparison of the Believer’s life in the dunya to a prison is only with regards to restrictions that he has to observe. He is not permitted to do whatever he desires. He may only do what Allah permits him to do. Similarly, comparison of the unbeliever’s life in the dunya to a paradise is only with regards to the absence of restriction. He does whatever he desires.

Returning to where we started, are we really free? Politically, we are free. We are not slaves of other people. Yet, we are the slaves of Allah! Thus, Allah repeatedly calls us His slaves. Therefore, we are free, yet we are not!

## Our Purpose, Our Obligation

With regards the purpose of man's creation, Allah Ta'aala says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

*I only created jinn and man so that they would worship me.*<sup>3</sup>

The Arabic word for worship, 'ibaadah, is derived from the same root as the Arabic word for slave, 'abd. Thus, the meaning of this aayah is 'I only created jinn and man so that they behave like my slaves'. Furthermore, the Arabs say:

الإنسانُ عبدُ الإحسانِ

*Man is the slave of benevolence.*

Do a man a favour and he becomes obliged to you. Allah is man's greatest benefactor. In fact, He is man's only benefactor. Therefore, should man not behave like His slaves? Is it not our purpose and obligation, even if we are free?

## A Question of Perception

You must have heard the adage 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. The same is true with regards to pleasure etc. It is a question of perception. One man's satisfaction may not be the same for another. The Indian eats his spicy hot food with relish, even if it causes excessive perspiration. The European thinks he is punishing himself. 'Crazy Indian' he thinks. Obedience to Allah's command is similar. In the eyes of the onlooker, it is restrictive, strenuous and demanding. For the worshipper, however, it is Jannah. His solace is in worshipping Allah. The following quotations depict this phenomenon:

~ "If this is the condition of the dwellers of Jannah, they certainly have a pleasant life."

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<sup>3</sup> Surah Adh-Dhaariyaat, Aayah 56

- ~ “Poor worldly people! They leave the world without tasting the most pleasurable and delightful aspect in the world.”
- ~ “If the kings and their children know the pleasure we enjoy, they would draw their swords to snatch it from us.”
- ~ “There is a Jannah in the dunya and the one who does not enter it will not enter the Jannah of the Hereafter.”

Accordingly, such people are in a *prison*, yet they are in a Jannah.

### **Alive but Dead . . . Dead but Alive**

Describing the virtue of *dhikr* (remembering Allah), Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam said:

مثل الذي يذكر ربه والذي لا يذكر ربه مثل الحي والميت

*The example of the one who remembers his Rabb and the one who does not is like that of the living and the dead.*<sup>4</sup>

The one who remembers Allah is physically and spiritually alive. However, the one who does not remember Allah is spiritually dead. Even if he is alive, walking, talking and doing everything living people do, he is dead! He is alive, but dead!

On the other hand, Allah Ta’aala tells us with regards the martyrs:

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

*Do not say with regards those who are slain in the path of Allah, ‘They are dead’. No, they are alive but you do not realise.*<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the martyr is dead, yet alive.

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<sup>4</sup> Saheeh-ul-Bukhaari, Hadith 6044

<sup>5</sup> Surah Al-Baqarah, Aayah 154

## Wealthy but Poor . . . Poor but Wealthy

Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* said:

ليس الغني عن كثرة العرض ولكن الغني غني النفس

*Wealth is not abundance of material possession. Wealth is contentment.*<sup>6</sup>

On one occasion, he *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* said to Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah (ra):

وَأَرْضَ بِمَا قَسَمَ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَكُنْ أَغْنَى النَّاسِ

*Be content with what Allah has destined for you and you will be the wealthiest of people.*<sup>7</sup>

In the light of these narrations, a wealthy man who is not content with what he has is actually poor. Can he truly enjoy his wealth? Conversely, a poor man who is content is actually wealthy. Despite the absence of wealth, he enjoys his life. Thus, the former is wealthy yet poor and the latter is poor yet wealthy.

## Knowledgeable Yet Ignorant

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

*Allah only accepts tawbah from those who do wrong ignorantly and make tawbah soon thereafter, those are the ones whose tawbah Allah accepts – and Allah is All Knowing, All-Wise.*<sup>8</sup>

The word *بِجَهَالَةٍ* could be interpreted to mean that *tawbah* is only accepted from one who sins due to ignorance of the *sharee'ah*.

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<sup>6</sup> Sunan At-Tirmidhi Hadith 2373

<sup>7</sup> Sunan At-Tirmidhi, Hadith 2305 Musnad Ahmad, Hadith 8095

<sup>8</sup> Surah An-Nisaa, Aayah 17

Hence, Allah does not accept the *tawbah* of a person who sinned knowing that his action is sinful. *Your tawbah will only be accepted if you did not know.* This interpretation, however, is erroneous. The commentators of the Qur'aan unanimously maintain that this is not the intent of the word **جَهَالَةً**. On the contrary; it means that sin is ignorance. Thus, every sinner is ignorant, whether he knows that his action is sinful or not. Therefore, a man who sins knowing that his action is sinful is knowledgeable yet ignorant.

### **Married Yet Single**

A man takes a second wife because it is a *sunnah* but then disregards the *shar'i* injunction of treating both wives equally. Thus, he now neglects the first wife as if she does not even exist. Would you not say that he is following the *sunnah* yet he is not and that his first wife is married yet single?

### **Salaah and Saum**

How many of us perform *salaah* yet we do not? Our bodies are in *salaah* but our thoughts are everywhere else but *salaah*. Likewise, we so often fast yet we do not. Our stomachs fast but not our ears, eyes and tongues. We abstain from the things which nullify our *saum*, but we see, hear and speak what we are not supposed to.

### **Are We Muslim Yet . . . ?**

Following the above, could we add that we are Muslim yet we are not? We say that we are Muslim but we do not behave like Muslims. In view of the consensus of the *Ahlus-Sunnah* that no sin besides disbelief renders a person out of the pale of Islam,

we would not go that far, we would not say that we are Muslim yet we are not. After all, *imaan* is the key to Jannah. Thus, even sinful Believers will eventually enter Jannah. Nevertheless, the importance of adhering to Allah's commands and abstaining from His prohibitions must not be trivialised because just as every key has teeth, good actions are the teeth of the key to Jannah.

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