

The Obligations of Sacred Law: Between Ease and Difficulty

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Praised be God. Praised be God. Praised be God; a praise commensurate to His bounties and equivalent to His plentiful blessings. O our Lord, for you is praise befitting Your sublime essence and Your majestic Dominion. Transcendent are You; O God I am unable to enumerate Your exaltations, for You are as You exalt Yourself. I testify that there is no deity except God alone, who has no partner, and I testify that Muhammad is His slave, His Messenger, and His pure and intimate friend; the best Prophet God sent. God sent him to the whole world as a bearer of glad tidings and as a warner. O God send your mercy, peace, and blessings upon our master Muhammad and upon the family of our master Muhammad²; continuous peace and blessings that last until the Day of Judgment.

I exhort you, O Muslims, and my wrongful self, to fear³ God, the Exalted.

The various obligations of the Sacred Law, decreed for us by God, the Transcendent and Exalted, will not be easy for the man who confronts them relying upon himself and his own illusory strength. The diverse obligations of the Sacred Law, decreed by God, the Majestic and Great, will never be difficult for the man who confronts them relying upon his Master and Creator; taking refuge in the Omnipotence of his Lord, the Transcendent and Exalted and absolving himself from his own power and might. First and foremost, we must all appreciate this reality.

The problem that many Muslims suffer from today is that they rely upon themselves when facing the divine obligations decreed by God, the Transcendent and Exalted. They rely upon delusions of their own strength and power yet they are surprised by inability and they are bewildered by weakness. Hence, they turn on their heels and retreat in the face of most or all of these obligations.

When one of them is reminded of the necessity to keep away from obscenities and destructive transgressions, which God, the Transcendent and Exalted, has forbidden, and to shun submitting to perverted impulses, he complains. He complains of his impotence and he complains of what he calls 'challenges' that catch him off guard.

¹ The Friday sermon delivered by Shaykh Dr Muhammad Said Ramadan al-Buti at the Umayyad mosque, Damascus, on the 27th of Rabi' al-Awwal 1431 (in the year of the Hejira) which corresponds to the 12th of March 2010 (CE).

² An invocation that is recited each time the name of the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned.

³ The Arabic term "taqwa", translated as fear of God, is a concept that may be defined as following the commands of God and avoiding His prohibitions with reverence and awe for the majesty of God. Taqwa gives rise to the protection of God.

When one of them is reminded of the necessity to abide by the regulations of sacred law relating to commerce in the marketplace, the necessity to keep away from the causes of corruption and depravity, to avoid the varying degrees of well-known offenses that God, the Exalted and Transcendent, has forbidden in the marketplace, to avoid the different shades of wayward transaction that deviate from the commandments of God, the Transcendent and Exalted; he complains and moans, pointing out his impotence whilst drawing attention to the ‘challenges’ that he faces. He claims that these make him unable to observe the commands of God, the Transcendent and Exalted, and he remains intent upon various transgressions in the marketplace and in commerce. How numerous are the types of deviancy, that you are aware of, in the different realms of commerce.

When one of them is reminded of the necessity to abide by virtuous moral character with one’s family at home, the regulations of conduct between husband and wife and between wife and husband, and the responsibility of parents towards their children, he moans once again and confesses his impotence. Once more he makes mention of the self-styled ‘challenges’ that he faces in society that make him incapable of being restrained by the commandments of God, the Transcendent and Exalted. What is the reason for this?

The reason is that these people confront the commands of God, the Majestic and Mighty, and His obligations relying upon illusions of their own strength and illusions of their own power. I ask, has any person, past or present, possessed intrinsic independent power? Using such power to carry out his own affairs, let alone responding to the commands of the Transcendent and Exalted and His obligations? Have any of the Messengers or Prophets relied upon their own strength and own intrinsic power when responding to the commandments set down by God, the Majestic and Mighty? Is there anyone who can be patient except that God makes him patient? Is anyone able to fulfill a command except that God, the Transcendent and Exalted, gives him the power to do so?

Have you not recited the speech of God, the Mighty and Majestic, “**and man was created weak**”⁴? Have you not read the words of God, the Mighty and Majestic, “**Indeed We have created man in hardship**”⁵? (Created) in supreme inability and in extreme weakness, thereby enduring hardships and being put under strain when he wants to implement any order. Have you not recited the speech of God, the Mighty and Majestic, “**Therefore flee to God. I am a clear warner from Him to you!**”⁶? Escape to God from what? Flee to God from your weakness. Flee to God from your inability. Flee to God from what you have called ‘challenges’.

This is the problem that many Muslims suffer from at present. The word ‘challenges’ is a modern word that was unknown to the previous generations. It is a word that is on the lips of everyone surprised by their impotence, when they depend upon themselves. When they rely upon their own power they are surprised by their

⁴ A translation of the meaning of a verse from the Qur'an: chapter number 4: verse number 28: i.e. Q (4:28).

⁵ Q (90:4)

⁶ Q (51:50)

weakness. They began to explain this away by using the term ‘challenges’. Certainly the companions of the Messenger of God never knew this word. Undoubtedly, the strains that they were put under were several times worse than the so-called ‘challenges’ endured by most of today’s Muslims.

The generation after the companions of the Prophet met the commands of God and His obligations head on, opening up the corners of the earth, east and west, and implementing the orders of God, the Mighty and Majestic. Not one of them moaned nor complained about confronting what some nowadays call ‘challenges’. What is the difference between them and the Muslims, or some of the Muslims, today? They relied upon success being granted by God and depended upon the Omnipotence of God. Their dependence upon the Omnipotence of God, the Mighty and Majestic, was translated into perpetually taking refuge in Him and continuous humility at His threshold and unremittingly lowering themselves in front of their Master and Creator, the Majestic and Mighty. In this way they derived power from God, the Majestic and Mighty. By means of standing at the door of God, by means of continuous humility at the threshold of God, by means of unremittingly lowering themselves and submission in front of God they derived ability and hence their impotence and weakness were transformed into power and strength. However it was not their power but the Omnipotence of God, the Transcendent and Exalted.

Today if only the Muslims, who receive orders and obligations from God much like their predecessors, expressed humility at the threshold of God and abased themselves at the door of God and lowered themselves, submitting in earnest unremitting continuous prayer; thus taking refuge in what their predecessors took refuge in. The Muslims would then find that God would grant them the same miracles that he awarded to His slaves from the previous generations. The way of God, Most Majestic and Mighty, with his slaves is one, it neither changes nor alters.

O Brothers, the arabic word ‘obligations’ is derived from the word *‘kulfab’* and *‘kulfab’* means difficulty. For God there is a dazzling wisdom in Him burdening us with difficulties, which are expressed as obligations. What is this wisdom? In order that the strains of these difficulties awaken us to our lowness and weakness and therefore to our state of servitude to God, the Transcendent and Exalted. Feelings of servitude arise in our depths leading us to take refuge in God; not just for an hour each day but so that our taking refuge in Him is a continuous nourishment, bringing new life to the obligations that God has commanded.

Do you not stand motionless, every day, in front of God, the Mighty and Majestic and recite, **“You alone do we worship and Your help alone do we seek”**⁷? What is the relationship between **“You alone do we worship”** and our words **“Your help alone do we seek”**? **“You alone do we worship”** is an assertion. We say it meaning by it a determination and agreement between us and God, the Majestic and Mighty, to respond to His orders. We then declare our complete inability and weakness, and that we do not possess any power to respond to and fulfill what we have promised God, the Mighty and Majestic. Therefore we say, **“Your help alone do we seek.”** It is the

⁷ Q (1:4-5)

verse **“Your help alone do we seek”** that gives spirit and vitality to our words, **“You alone do we worship”**.

Have you not recited the speech of God, describing His divine way, **“We sent [Messengers] already to peoples that were before you, and We visited them with a suffering and adversity, in order that they may grow humble. If only, when Our disaster came upon them, they had been humble! But their hearts were hardened, and the Devil made all they used to do seem fair to them. Then, when they forgot that which they had been reminded of, we opened to them the gates of all things till, even as they were rejoicing in what they had been given, We seized them suddenly, and they were plunged into despair.”**⁸

This is a way of the slaves of God, the Mighty and Majestic, that has passed. God burdening his slaves with calamities. Yes, but why? So that the scourge of calamities drives them to God; so that they flee to God, the Transcendent and Exalted.

O slaves of God, how easy it is to implement the commandments of God, which are binding upon us, if we turn to God. If we hasten, with endeavour, clinging to the thresholds of God and implemented the speech of God, **“Therefore flee to God. I am a clear warner from Him to you!”**⁹. How straightforward for those who complain that they are unable to conform to the regulations of Sacred financial transaction law in the marketplace. How simple to follow them if they in the morning and evening seek refuge in God and derive success from God with sincerity, fervour and lowering oneself. You will then see, when the traders adhere to the path that God has prescribed, that there will be no depravity nor corruption anywhere, neither in the marketplace, nor amongst the provisions of people, nor in their transactions purged of bribery.

How easy for the person who spends time with his family, then complains that he suffers from difficulties inside his home making him unable to implement the commands of God with regards to his wife and his children. How easy he would find submitting to the commands of God if he does what has been mentioned. If he absolves himself from his power and his might and seeks refuge with God, sincerely lowering himself, taking up the position of a beggar at the door of God, the Mighty and Majestic, saying, “O Lord, You ordered me and I am unable. You entrusted me and I am weak. Only you can replace my weakness with strength. Only you can exchange my helplessness for power. O Lord, I am your weak slave. I seek refuge in You and I flee from my weakness to you.” The Maker, the Mighty and Majestic, responds swiftly.

What about the many young men who complain to me about wanting to be upright in the path of God but that their covetous impulses call them to slipping and straying; what do we do? The door is open and the treatment is in front of you. The cure is for you to seek refuge in God, speak out and complain to God about your state and protest to God about your weakness.

⁸ Q (6: 42-44)

⁹ Q (51:50)

One young man stood in a hall at university complaining to me about his weakness and inability. He confessed to me, with anguish, that he does not want to disobey God but he is powerless studying at university. His lower self has run away with him and calls him to commit forbidden acts, what shall I do? I said to him: “Do you not see this brokenness that you have revealed to me? Direct this same brokenness not to me, for I am weak just like you. Face your Lord with this brokenness. Face your Master with this weakness. Face your Creator with this abasement. Speak to Him, in the midst of the night. Plead to him in your moments of solitude, “O Lord, I love to obey You and I hate to disobey You. But I am weak and unable; just as You have described Your slaves. O Lord, give me strength to uphold your command, give me the power to respond to your judgement.” Do this and you will soon find Your Lord saying to you, “Here I am, My slave”.

O slaves of God, this is the treatment for the Muslims of today. Pass it on to everyone who complains about all the different so-called ‘challenges’, whether they come from the East or West or spring from our own society. Tell those who complain about ‘challenges’ that their treatment has been prescribed and their cure is ready-take it. It is to seek refuge in God, to constantly beg and lower oneself at the threshold of God. And look forward to how you will find the response after taking the cure.

I deliver this sermon and seek the forgiveness of God, the Majestic.
Seek his forgiveness and He will forgive you.