The Muslim Between Servitude (عبودية Ubudiyyah) of Allah (swt) and the Pragmatism of Men

(Translated)

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When any Muslim is asked today: “What is the purpose of your creation?” he answers with full confidence: “To worship Allah alone.” Everyone here memorizes His (swt) saying: ﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾ **“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me”** [TMQ Surah Adh-Dhariyat: 56] However, the surprise comes with the practical application of the true concept of worship, which encompasses all aspects of life. We see many—including members of Islamic groups—evading the comprehensiveness of worship and making excuses based on reality and the pressure from Western countries hostile to Islam, claiming that we must not clash with the authority and influential figures in the state to achieve the comprehensive meaning of servitude in all facets of the state and society through establishing a real Islamic state.

When discussing the establishment of an Islamic state that governs by Islam in all political, economic, social, and other aspects, you see this group saying: “The West will not allow this, and we will be fought, and the West will wage an unrelenting war against us,” and other such arguments that we refute in this article.

To begin discussing these issues, we must understand the concept of servitude (‘ubudiyyah) as Allah (swt) intended it, and how a human being can be a true servant of Allah.

As for the concept of servitude (‘ubudiyyah), we must understand it within the context of the revelation; the Qur’an was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (saw) while he was in Makkah, and the concept of servitude was known among the Quraysh to mean complete submission to the master, and that the slave had no right to discuss his master’s commands and prohibitions, nor the right to leave his master’s home, and he could not even marry except with his permission.

The slave was treated as a commodity and chattel to be bought and sold without the slightest legal protection, and the masters possessed absolute authority to punish, torture, and kill without accountability.

Within this clear concept of servitude, the Noble Qur’an was revealed to establish the meaning of servitude as being for Allah (swt) alone, and to declare that all human beings—both the free and the enslaved—are servants. Here, the verses came to affirm the meaning of servitude to the Creator, and that all human beings must submit to Allah with the submission of servants. Allah the Most High said: ﴿إِن كُلُّ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْداً﴾ **“Indeed, everyone in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Most Merciful as a servant”** [TMQ Surah Maryam: 93]. Then He spoke of the servitude of the believers as an honor for them: ﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْناً وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَاماً﴾ **“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth**

easily, and when the ignorant address them, they say words of peace" [TMQ Surah Al-Furqan: 63]. And He negated the authority of Satan over them: ﴿إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ﴾ **"Indeed, over My servants you will have no authority, except those who follow you of the deviators"** [TMQ Surah Al-Hijr: 42]. Then He honored His noble Messenger Muhammad (saw) by describing him with servitude in the context of the Night Journey, ﴿سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلاً﴾ **"Exalted is He who took His Servant by night"** [TMQ Surah Al-Isra'a: 1], and in the context of the revelation of the Book: ﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيراً﴾ **"Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner"** [TMQ Surah Al-Furqan: 1].

When our noble Prophet (saw) called to Islam and to the testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, the polytheists understood from the very first day that they were required to submit to Allah with the submission of servants—surrendering to His commands, desisting from His prohibitions, and submitting to the political rule of the Prophet (saw) in the Islamic state which he was striving to establish, applying Islam in all aspects of life, implementing complete servitude to Allah without objection or resentment, even in the depths of their souls, but rather with absolute submission to the Revelation. This is the meaning of true Islam. Allah the Most High said: ﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّى يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجاً مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيماً﴾ **"But no, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in submission"** [TMQ Surah An-Nisaa: 65].

As for the objection of the objectors now that reality does not permit the achievement of complete servitude to Allah (swt)—including that Muslims have a state that rules by Islam, applies Allah's law, and carries Islam to the world through Da'wah and Jihad—this is a flaw influenced by Western political thought built upon compromise and upon conforming to reality, making reality a source for rulings even if this reality contradicts Islam. They either ignore these texts by claiming they do not apply to our reality, or they twist their meanings and interpret them with interpretations that empty them of their substance and nullify the obligation to adopt them.

Unfortunately, this mentality has deviated from the meaning of servitude to Allah, and has begun to argue against Shariah rulings and object to divine directives with rationalistic doubts, instead of submitting completely and saying simply, "We hear and we obey," and without slipping into pragmatic (utilitarian) thinking, which contradicts Islam.

We refute here the arguments of the pragmatists by demonstrating the extent of the Prophet's (saw) adherence to the revelation, and his refusal to be swayed by the pressures of reality, and indeed his refusal to make concessions to the disbelievers, no matter how small or secondary they may have seemed.

The Qur'an came to shed light on the attempts of the disbelievers to divert the call from its path. Allah (swt) said in Surah Al-Israa': ﴿وَإِن كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذاً لَّاتَّخَذُوكَ خَلِيلاً * وَلَوْلَا أَن ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدتَّ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئاً قَلِيلاً * إِذاً لَّأَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيراً﴾ **"And indeed, they were near to tempting you away from that which We revealed to you, O Muhammad, that you might invent about Us something else;**

and then they would have taken you as a friend. * And if We had not strengthened you, you would have almost inclined to them a little. * Then if you had, We would have made you taste double punishment in life and double after death. Then you would not find for yourself against Us a helper" [TMQ Surah Al-Isra'a: 73-75]. And Allah (swt) said in Surah Al-Ma'idah: ﴿وَأَنِ احْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَن يَفْتِنُوكَ عَن بَعْضِ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَن يُصِيبَهُم بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِنَّ كَثِيراً مِّنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ﴾ **"And judge, O Muhammad, between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their inclinations and beware of them, lest they tempt you away from some of what Allah has revealed to you. And if they turn away - then know that Allah only intends to afflict them with some of their [own] sins. And indeed, many among the people are defiantly disobedient"** [TMQ Surah Al-Ma'idah: 49].

The attempts of the kuffar (disbelievers) were either to replace the revelation entirely, or to tempt the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims after him away from some of Islam by convincing them to apply some of it and abandon other parts of it.

These verses demolish the idea of gradual application of Islam that some "Islamists" promote; for in the end, it means applying some of Islam and applying some of Kufr, and this is not permissible.

As for the attempts by some who showed a willingness to accept the Dawah of the Prophet (saw), asking him (saw) to concede the Shariah rulings in exchange for providing the support and protection that he (saw) was in dire need of, here we have two stories from his noble Seerah (Prophetic biography):

First: The story of the Prophet's (saw) offer to Banu 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah: The Messenger of Allah (saw) came to Banu 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah, called them to Allah, and offered himself to them. A man among them named Bayharah ibn Faras said to himself: "By Allah, if I were to take this young man from Quraysh, I would consume the Arabs with him." Then he turned to the Prophet (saw) and asked him for a worldly, political condition: "What do you think if we pledge allegiance to you regarding your matter, and then Allah makes you prevail over those who oppose you, will the authority be for us after you?" The Prophet (saw) answered him with the certainty of the bearer of the divine message: «الْأَمْرُ إِلَى اللهِ يَضَعُهُ حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ» **"The matter of authority belongs to Allah; He places it where He wills."** So Bayharah refused to give support and said: "Should we offer our necks to the Arabs for you, then if Allah makes you prevail, the authority will be for others, not us. We have no need for your matter," so they refused to support him. Their nussrah (military support) was conditional upon something the Prophet (saw) did not possess—that the Khilafah would be for them after him. They coveted authority, whereas the Shariah ruling regarding the appointment of the Khaleefah (caliph) is that it is through the pledge of allegiance (bay'ah) and consent of the Muslims, as was later established in the bay'ah of Abu Bakr (ra) in the Saqifah of Banu Sa'idah.

If the Prophet (saw) had been able to act with the pragmatism of some Islamists today, he would have missed a great opportunity to attain governance and secure nussrah, for he could have convinced Banu 'Amir to retract their opinion after Iman had become firmly established in their hearts. But it was the divine revelation that does not accept compromise regarding the Deen of Allah (swt).

Secondly: The story of the Prophet (saw) presenting himself to Banu Shayban bin Tha'labah: The Messenger of Allah (saw) stood, accompanied by Abu Bakr (ra) and Ali

(ra), at the assembly of Banu Shayban, among whom were their chieftains: Mafruq bin 'Amr, Hani bin Qabisah, and Al-Muthanna bin Harithah. He said to them: **«أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَأَنْ تُؤْوُونِي وَتَنْصُرُونِي حَتَّى أُؤَدِّيَ عَنِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَمَرَنِي بِهِ» "I call you to bear witness that there is no god but Allah, alone with no partner, and that I am the Messenger of Allah; and to shelter me and grant me victory until I deliver what Allah has commanded me."** Mafruq said: "By Allah, O brother of Quraysh, you have called to noble morals and excellent deeds. Indeed, a people have turned away who denied you and united against you." And Al-Muthanna bin Harithah said: "We have settled between two borders: the waters of the Arabs and the rivers of Kisra (Chosroes), and Kisra has taken a covenant from us not to initiate any new matter nor support anyone who initiates something. So if you want us to grant you support and protect you from the side of the Arab lands, we will do so. But as for what pertains to the lands of Persia and Kisra, the sin of its perpetrator is unforgiven and his excuse is unacceptable." The Prophet (saw) replied to them, saying: **«مَا أَسَأْتُمُ الرَّدَّ إِذْ أَفْصَحْتُمْ بِالصِّدْقِ، إِنَّهُ لَا يَقُومُ بِدِينِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ حَاطَهُ مِنْ جَمِيعِ جَوَانِبِهِ» "You have not failed in your response, for you have spoken with truth. Indeed, none will uphold the Deen of Allah except he who shields it from all its sides."**

Indeed, the Prophet (saw) also did not accept their conditional, partial support, and he emphasized that the Deen of Islam would only be supported by those prepared to confront all who oppose it. This is what the Prophet (saw) did in his lifetime and what the Khulafa'a Rashidun (Rightly Guided Caliphs) after him did; they confronted the Persians and the Romans on two fronts simultaneously, and Allah (swt) granted them a mighty victory. Had the Prophet (saw) accepted the partial support of Banu Shayban, he would have accepted the concept of a border state and entrenched the idea of fearing the Persians, let alone the Romans. However, servitude to Allah (swt) necessitates jihad, courage, and self-sacrifice. This is what Banu Shayban themselves later proved when they joined the cause and fought the Persians relentlessly, led by their chief Al-Muthanna bin Harithah al-Shaybani (ra).

What we have cited of Shariah texts is but a drop in the ocean of evidence confirming the extent of the adherence of the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra) to the methodology of revelation and their achievement of complete servitude to Allah, and their distance from any pragmatic, realist methodology that is promoted today as the safest approach for coexisting with the dominant Western powers dominating the world. In reality, it is a methodology of dissolution and assimilation into the international system, and not the methodology of revelation in the Sunnah of struggle, succession in ruling (istikhlaf), and the supremacy of Islam, which is in a perpetual conflict against disbelief and its people until the ruling governance of Islam encompasses the entire world, soon, by the permission of Allah (swt).