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I. A. B. BALOGUN

ISLAMIC TENETS AND THE SHARI'AH

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Edited by

I. A. B. Balogun

UNIVERSITY OF BADAKHSHAN

Islamic Tenets and the Shari'ah

Islamic Tenets and the *Shari'ah*

By

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Finally, it should be acknowledged that Allah, in giving us guidelines for purification through the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*, wishes us no harm as evident in Q.5: 6 (*Al-Mā'idah*): "Allah does not wish to place you in difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete His favour on you, that you may be grateful." May Allah help us in observing these guidelines, overlook our shortcomings and reward us abundantly in this world and the Hereafter.

Assalām 'Alaikum Waraḥmatullāh Wabarakātuh.

Chapter Two

The Concept of Worship and Supplication in Islam

Abdul-Lateef Wole Abbas

Introduction

'*Ḍbādah* is an Arabic word usually translated into English as "worship". Worship itself, is defined as an act of adoration, service or homage paid to a deity. On the other hand, *Du'a'* means supplication. This is defined as a petition by a human being to another, or for a thing.

Because of the nature of a human being as a dependent creature, he puts his requests to a higher being in his daily activities. He requires to seek the favour of that Being, who stands in a position to give. This, he does by way of services and petition. However, the qualification of the said higher Being needs to be examined to enable us to identify Him. The ways and manners in which we relate to Him is what this paper sets out to examine.

The Nature of the Creator

From the time of man's creation, he was charged with seeking guidance that the Creator would send down from time to time. Whoever follows it would not be engulfed in either fear or sorrow. The Qur'an (2:38 *(Al-Baqarah)*) states: "We said, go down hence, when guidance is revealed from Me, those that accept it shall have nothing to fear or to regret".

Man soon forgot this directive and created for himself objects as intermediaries between him and the Creator. He thought he should approach Him through other objects He created like sun, moon, trees, fire, etc. That was the beginning of idol-worship. In Yorubaland, different idol worshippers believe in the existence of Allah, they only believe He is too mighty to be approached directly.

Conversely, Islam treats all human beings as essentially equal before Allah, and He himself opens lines for all His creatures to commune directly with Him. He says:

"When my servants ask you (O Muhammad!) about Me, (tell them) I am surely near them, I answer the call of the caller whenever he calls on Me. Let them answer my call too, let them believe in Me if they want to be guided." (Q.2:186 *(Al-Baqarah)*)

Allah frowns at employing other beings or creatures to reach Him. Doing that amounts to *Shirk*, that is, associating partnership with Him. Such association is a heinous sin that attracts no forgiveness. The Qur'an states:

Allah will surely not forgive that partners should be set with Him, but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth." (Q.4: 48 *(An-Nisa')*).

Allah, as he has described Himself, is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that are therein. He reaches all eyes but no eye reaches Him. Qur'an 6:103 *(Al-An'am)* says:

"No vision can grasp Him, but his grasp is over all visions". And in fact, it is not our business wanting to see Him. We all read what happened to Musa, a prophet and a messenger of His, when he attempted to see Allah. Qur'an 7:143 *(Al-A'raf)* reads:

When [Musa] came to the place appointed by us, and his Lord addressed him. He said: "O my Lord, show (Thyself) to me, that I may look upon Thee". Allah said: "By no means can'st thou see Me (Direct) but look upon the mount. If it abides in its place, then shall thou see Me". When his Lord manifested Himself to the mount, He made it as dust, and [Musa] fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses he said, "Glory be to Thee, to Thee I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe."

Musa fell down senselessly and even the mountain on which Allah revealed Himself crushed to fine dust. Therefore, it is impossible for any mortal to see God. However, to want to see God before you worship Him is to ask for too much and that can only lead to disbelief.

There are abundant signs for a serious person to feel Allah's existence and presence. There is the sun that appears in the morning and sets in the evening. There are the moon and stars that come up in the evening and vanish before dawn. There is the sky, not supported by any pillar, yet it does not crumble. A sensible person should know that there must be someone, living somewhere and directing the affairs of all these and many more.

We should also learn from the experience of Prophet Ibraheem as presented in the Qur'an (6:76-79 *(Al-An'am)*) thus:

When the night covered him over, he saw a star, he said: "This is my Lord", but when it set, he said: "I love not those that set". When he saw the moon rising in splendour, he said: "This is my Lord", but when the

moon set, he said, "Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among those who go astray".

When he saw the sun rising in splendour, he said, "This is my Lord, this is the greatest of all", but when the sun set, he said, "O my people, I am indeed free from your guilt of giving partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah".

It is pertinent to note in these verses, that Prophet Ibraheem saw a star in the night, he thought it was God, but when it set, he concluded it couldn't have been God, because God could not cease. The same thing he thought of the moon and the sun when they both appeared and set at different times. He eventually concluded that taking anything as God would lead to polytheism. He then decided to worship Allah Who cannot be seen.

In sum, Allah Himself recommended *al-Qur'an* as a guide for the righteous, who believe in the unseen and are steadfast in their *salat*. Thus Qur'an 2:2-3 (*Al-Baqarah*) says:

This is the Book, in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah. Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.

The unseen here refers to Allah. In addition, the Almighty describes Himself in the Holy Book thus:

Allah, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting, Supporter of all. Neither slumber nor sleep can seize Him. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who then can intercede in his presence except by His permission? He knoweth what (appareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as he willeth. His throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth

no fatigue in guarding and preserving them, for He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory) (Q.2:255 (*Al-Baqarah*)).

This verse is popularly known as *Āyat-ul-Qursiyy*. God describes Himself as One Who, among His other attributes, does not sleep nor slumber. He lives and does not die. He also knows the affairs of everybody whether at present or in the future. He is the Most Sublime and Most Mighty.

Form of Worship

Having known God as the Creator and the Sustainer of His creatures, we need to also know practically how to show our gratitude to Him for the innumerable mercies He has showered on us.

In the first place, everything has its own purpose. The purpose for creating man as enunciated by Allah Himself is to worship the Creator. The Qur'an 51:56 (*Adh-Dhāriyāt*) states: "I have not created the *jinn* (i.e. spirits) and man except that they should worship Me". This means that the totality of the aim of creating man is worship. But how does he worship Allah? What constitutes worship? Is it the performance of *ṣalaat* or its combination with *Du'ā'*? Is there any difference between *ṣalaat* and prayers? These questions form the core of our discourse.

As earlier indicated at the beginning of this chapter, *'Ibādah* which is usually used in the Qur'an, means worship. However, a lot of people, out of ignorance, believe that worship means the performance of *ṣalaat* alone, while others of the same category believe that the observance of the five pillars of Islam is what constitutes worship. What really constitutes worship is more than these. *Ṣalaat* (ritual prayers) and the other four pillars of Islam are just parts of worship.

H.A.R. Gibb *et. al.* define *'Ibādah* in Islam as ordinance on worship which comprises the first part of the works of law in Islam. These are *Tahārah* (i.e. cleanliness), *Ṣalaat*, *Zakaat*, *Sawm*, *Hajj* and *Jihād*. To support this the holy Prophet

Muhammad (PBOH), in one of his *ahādīth* (traditions), states as follows:

Islam is built on five pillars. To testify that there is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, to establish prayer, paying alms to the poor, pilgrimage to the House (i.e. *Ka'bah*) and fasting in the month of *Ramadān* (Bukhārī and Muslim).

In performing *ṣalaat*, a Muslim has to be clean physically and spiritually before he approaches his Lord. This is so because the Prophet (PBOH) describes Allah, in the tenth *ḥadīth* of An-Nawawi's Forty Collections, as being good and that He would accept nothing save what is good. He goes on to illustrate this with the story of a man on a journey. His food is forbidden, his drink is forbidden, his clothing is forbidden and yet he stretches out his hand to Allah while performing *salah*. How, he asks, would Allah accept his prayer? This means that for anyone wanting to perform *ṣalāt* or fasting or *hajj* he/she has to ensure that his/her mind as well as physical make-up is clean. It is even recommended that whenever one decides to go to mosque for *salaat*, one should dress well. Allah states: "O ye who believe, ensure that you dress well when going to any mosque" (Q.7: 31; *(Al-A'raf)*).

As for *jihād*, it is made compulsory on all Muslims as an act of worship. It is not for a section of Muslims to the exception of others. It is a directive of Allah in the Holy Qur'an (61:10 and 11 *(Aṣ-Ṣaf)*):

Oh you who believe, can I lead you to a venture which would save you from painful punishment? You should have faith in Allah and his apostle, and fight for His course with your wealth and your persons. That would be best for you, if you know.

There is also *Mu'āmalāt* (human transactions) which include contract between people. Islam enjoins Muslims to keep to the

contractual agreement. If you do, you will be rewarded' but if you default, not due to accident, you are due for Allah's punishment because it is considered part of '*Ibādah* (worship). The usual practice of distinguishing worship from business is totally abhorred in Islam. There should be no business language or practice or norm that may be against Islamic norms. In fact, you are rewarded for any lawful business you do so long as it is done in accordance with the agreement.

Under this category also come the laws relating to marriage and inheritance. People often flout marriage agreements, thinking that they are at liberty to do their whims. Under marriage, Islam wants you to consider your wife as primarily your partner who has equal roles to play to hold the marriage. Most Muslims are not aware of Qur'anic laws governing marriage. You see a lot of people contracting marriage under the so-called Yoruba custom. Many Muslim elites combine Islamic law with Common Law at the time of marriage, and they often dissolve such marriages in the Customary Courts usually headed by those who know next to nothing about Islam.

Muslims should now know that a lot happens to them every passing day in this area and something has to be done to arrest the situation. Many Muslims do not even dissolve their marriage in any law court. They throw their wives away like dogs if they do not want them again. Such was the practice of the *Jāhiliyyah* period (the period of ignorance in Arabia before Islam). The Holy Prophet (PBOH) in one of His *ahādīth* states that whoever maltreats his spouse will have half of his body paralysed on the day of *Qiyāmah*. This is because his wife is his better half. Also through the unorganised nature of the Muslim Community, many divorcees and widows are lost to other faiths. We should have marriage counselling for our couples. Our religion Islam has provisions for all these, but alas! We do not care to know.

On inheritance, like on marriage, several directives have been passed to humanity by the Creator in the Qur'an as guides. These directives become obligatory for the Muslim to apply, because Islam is not only a religion but also a way of life. Some Muslims, out of imitations, jettison these and distribute all their wealth

through a will against only one-third as contained in the *Shari'ah*. They should know that nobody should go against the directives of Allah. It is certainly a sin and to this effect, an injunction has been provided. Qur'an 33:36 (*Al-Ahzāb*) states:

It is not for true believers, men and women, to take their choice in their affairs if Allah and His apostle decree otherwise. He that disobeys Allah and His apostle has strayed far indeed.

Therefore, we should know that the doing of what we are directed by the *Shari'ah* is considered *'Ibādah* for us for which rewards are earned just as its refusal amounts to sin which attracts punishments.

There are other activities such as *'uqubāt* i.e. punishment and *adab* relating to morals and ethics. They are also considered acts of worship. If, for example, someone offends, it is one's duty as the authority to ensure that he/she is given appropriate punishment. Offenders of different status should be treated alike. The common practice of punishing common people to the exclusion of high status members of the community is at variance with Islamic provision. We should borrow a leaf from the action of the second Khalifah, 'Umar al-Khaṭṭāb, whose son committed fornication and was asked to be given a hundred lashes. In the course of the caning, the boy fainted, and this was reported to 'Umar who simply asked: "Has the caning been completed?" If this could be meted out to the son of the Head of State, we then have to re-examine ourselves.

On ethics, Muslims have to ensure good and nice relationship to two entities, namely: relationship to Almighty Allah and relationship to fellow human beings. Goodness is first due to parents after that of Allah. Then you must be nice to family members, who have rights on you as you have rights on them. Anything you do to people that makes them happy is an *'Ibādah*, and you are rewarded for your advice, your discussion, your talk, etc. All these are recompensed whether you do them positively or

negatively. The Prophet (PBOH) was quoted in an-Nawawi's 26th tradition to have said thus:

An alms is due from the finger-joint of [all] the people each day the sun rises. If you straighten out some trouble between two individuals it is an alms. If you help a man with his beast mounting him on it or hoisting up his baggage on it, it is an alms. Saying good word is an alms. Removing something harmful from the path is an alms.

Therefore, no small act of human being towards another is lost, it shall surely be accounted for. And whatever you do to better the lots of others is considered *'Ibādah* or worship.

Supplication or Du'ā'

Du'ā' as earlier mentioned, is a petition to the Creator for a general or specific purpose. A Muslim should believe that the power to make things happen rests solely in God. Therefore, Muslims should call on God to make things happen. Allah Himself directs us to call on Him and that He would answer us. There are, however, certain conditions we must satisfy. We must admit and believe in the oneness of Allah, we must observe His dos and guard against his don'ts as enumerated in the Holy Qur'an:

When my servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close to them. I respond to the prayer of every supplicant when he calleth on Me. Let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way. (Q.2:186 (*Al-Baqarah*))

However, it is not all prayers that are answered, just as it is not the prayers of only those who call on Him that are accepted. In this life, He, Allah, is *ar-Rahmān*, the Beneficent. In his *Rahmāniyyah*, He gives to everybody He wishes without any discrimination. Even if one wakes up everyday to abuse Allah, that does not stop his prosperity from Allah. But in the Hereafter,

He is *ar-Raheem*, i.e. The Merciful: Merciful only to those who did His wish in life. There, He would select among beings. There is danger in taking worship for prayers. They are different from one another, worship is compulsory and regulated while prayer is optional and could be said anywhere i.e. in the vehicle, aeroplane, ship, on bed, etc. but not in filthy places like toilet or bathroom.

We should realize that even in worship, prayers are said. For example, *Sūratul-Fātiḥah* is full of prayers and also many of the chapters and verses we recite in *ṣalāts* contain immense prayers.

Because people make a lot of demands from Allah, they often organise special prayer sessions where they recite the whole of the Qur'ān times without number. While one would not discourage this practice, one observes that most of those people who do this do not understand the contents of the Qur'ān; they may not even have attempted to read it, they only want to be benefitted by it, this is a very wrong attitude. The Qur'ān is meant to be recited regularly in order to gain from it.

Conclusion

All activities of a Muslim should be undertaken as '*Ibādah*. One should not take some as '*Ibādah* and some as a mere business. Rather, all businesses are considered worship as long as they are done in a *ḥalal* way. Muslims should de-emphasize this world and face the next life squarely. They, therefore, must engage more in the learning and recitation of the last testament to humanity, i.e. the Qur'ān. They should also concentrate on prayers that would ensure their welfare in the Hereafter.