

The Mindset of the *Ṣaḥābah* series:

We Hear and We Obey

Mindset 1

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا

“We hear and we obey.” This principle lays one of the greatest mindsets for the Muslim. It determines his every action, however great or small it might be. It determines his intuition and how he perceives different realities as well as any subsequent action or reaction. The *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum* exemplified for us this mindset in the best way. With the aid of this mindset they raised high the *Wahyī* (Revelation) and established it firmly upon the surface of the Earth at an exalted level.

In this article, we will explore the comprehensive mindset the *Ṣaḥābah* possessed owing to this profound principle.

Two Fundamental Premises

The principle of “We hear and we obey” and its successive mindset are founded on two fundamental premises:

1. The utmost truthful speech is the Speech of Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā*:

فَإِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ

2. The most beneficial guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*:

وَحَيْرَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

These two premises—their comprehensive, weighty and deep meanings—envelope the entire *Dīn* (Religion). They cannot be appreciated even if several volumes were dedicated to them, let alone articles. Given this reality, we suffice to mention here the main points which serve to provide an overview of these two premises.

1. **The utmost truthful speech is the Speech of Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā*.**

This denotes the following truths:

- a. His Speech is attributed with the ‘Utmost Truth’ and therefore anything contrary to His Speech is by definition ‘utmost falsehood.’
- b. Those whom the Speech of Allāh is directed at must be beings that act and react. Otherwise it defeats the purpose of the communication. They must be beings that can consciously enact upon receiving the Speech.

- c. Those whom the Speech of Allāh is directed at must be prone to drawing false conclusions from ‘speeches of utmost falsehood.’
- d. If ‘utmost falsehood’ is a reality, and induces a negative cause and effect on them, then the ‘Utmost Truth’ must be there to relieve them from those negative realities and effects, ensuring they attain the utmost protection and serenity.
- e. The One who spoke the ‘Utmost Truth’ must, by definition, know the ‘utmost falsehood’ as well as possess Eternal Knowledge. Only then could He have spoken the ‘Utmost Truth.’ Moreover, He must have been Just (Al-‘Adl) because He willingly spoke the ‘Utmost Truth’ out of choice. No one even pleaded with Him to do so.
- f. He must have been Merciful because the ‘utmost falsehood’ harms the creation and goes against their true interests, even though they are the ones that invented these lies and fabrications.
- g. He must be unrelentingly Merciful (Al-Raḥmān Al-Raḥīm) because the ‘Utmost Truth’ must continue to exist for every generation exactly as it was revealed. Moreover, it must be capable of overpowering every falsehood and lie, new and old.
- h. He must be Kind (Al-Ra’ūf) because the reality is that any Believer who recites it—irrespective whether they understand or not—is soothed by it.
- i. He *subḥānahu* communicated to us out of His Sheer Justice which is enveloped by His Sheer Mercy and Kindness. If that is the case, then all of His Actions must also be Just, Merciful and Kind.
- j. ‘Utmost Truth’ denotes that Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā* wanted *khayr* (goodness and wellbeing) for the creation. This is because He did not leave them to enact their own ‘utmost false speech.’ Instead, He spoke the ‘Utmost Truth’ to inspire and guide them towards their true interests, which they themselves are searching and wishing for—the greatest of all is the eternal, joyful life with Him in *jinān* (paradise).

2. The most beneficial guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam.

This denotes the following truths:

- a. He ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam was the walking embodiment of the *Waḥyī*, the embodiment of the ‘Utmost True Speech.’

- b. His intentions, his actions of the heart, his principles of perception and reflection, his outer deeds and character, all of them are part and parcel of 'most beneficial guidance' for the rest of creation.
- c. Every intuition, every -ism, every action that goes against his 'guidance' is, by definition, 'confusion and loss of direction' and necessarily possesses a regretful reality and painful cause and effect.
- d. 'Guidance' must have a destination. It must also have a path which leads to that destination. There must also be a guide/leader/sign showing the way to that destination. The destination of this great journey is the eternal *Riḍā* (Pleasure) of Allāh *jalla jalāluhu* and His eternal *Jannah*. The path is Islām. And the guide and leader that must be followed throughout this journey is Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*.
- e. Due to it being described as 'the utmost beneficial guidance,' it must then be inclusive of every individual in every generation, and must not only be just and fair but must also be pleasing and precisely perfect for everyone.

When one comes to know of these two premises, or fundamental truths, and comprehends its profound meanings and implications (as mentioned above), only then will he naturally flow towards the principle of "We hear and we obey" with pure love and absolute devotion.

Application of principle and mindset

What follows are brief illustrations of this principle as practiced by the *Ṣaḥābah*, and the profound mindset for perception, intuition and governance which it lays.

It is reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah *radiyallāhu 'anhu* that when it was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, "To Allāh belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth and whether you disclose that which is within yourself or conceal it, Allāh will call you to account according to it." Then He forgives whom He pleases and punishes whom He pleases, and Allāh is over everything Qadīr,¹ it weighed heavy on the hearts and minds of the Companions.

They went to the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, sat down on their knees and said, "O Messenger of Allāh, we were assigned some duties which were within our power to perform, such as prayer, fasting, fighting (in the cause of Allāh), and charity. Then this (the above-mentioned) verse was revealed unto you and it is beyond our power to live up to it.

¹ 2:284.

The Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* replied, “Do you intend to say what the people of the two books said before you, ‘We hear and disobey...?’ Rather you should say, ‘We hear and we obey, (we seek) Your forgiveness, our *Rabb!* And unto You is the return.’” So they said, “We hear and we obey, (we seek) Your forgiveness, Our *Rabb!* And unto You is the return.”

When the people recited it and when it flowed smoothly on their tongues, Allāh immediately revealed, “The Messenger believes in that which was sent down unto him from his *Rabb*, and so do the *mu’minūn*. Each one believes in Allāh, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers, saying, ‘We differentiate not between any of His Messengers, and they say, ‘We hear and we obey, (we seek) Your forgiveness, our *Rabb!* And unto You is the return.’”²

When they obeyed, Allāh abrogated this (verse) and revealed, “Allāh burdens not a soul beyond its capacity. It attains every good that it earns and it suffers every ill that it earns. Our *Rabb*, do not take us into account if we forget or make a mistake.” (The Prophet said,) Yes, our *Rabb!* Do not lay on us a burden as You laid on those before us. (The Prophet said,) Yes, our *Rabb*, impose not on us (burdens) which we have not the strength to bear. (The Prophet said,) Yes, and pardon us and grant us protection! And have mercy on us. You are our *Mawlā* (Protector, Guardian), so grant us victory over the disbelieving people.” [2:286] He (Allāh) said, Yes. [Muslim: 228]

Some pertinent points to reflect over from this incident:

- a. *Sūrah al-Baqarah* was revealed in Al-Madīnah, and these verses are its last verses. This then clearly asserts that the *Ṣaḥābah* obeyed every letter of the *Wahyī* that preceded these verses consciously and wholeheartedly, with love and absolute devotion and without any quarrel.
- b. When these verses were revealed, the Companions clearly understood that they will be held accountable for the sporadic thoughts and whispers that enter their hearts. They recognised their inability to repel these thoughts and whispers, and in turn not attaining the *Riḍā* (Pleasure) of Allāh *jalla jalāluhu* as they hoped to. This conclusion itself worried them and severely broke their hearts. They understood the verses literally and did not even give a chance to themselves to entertain another explanation or interpretation.
- c. They came to the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and knelt in front of him, which again reiterates their complete surrender and obedience to Allāh *‘azza wa jalla* and His Messenger.
- d. They had an amazing and extraordinary level of honesty: honesty with themselves, honesty with Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā* and honesty with the beloved Messenger.

² 2:285.

- e. The Prophet *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* himself understood the verse literally and knew with certitude that his sporadic thoughts and forgetfulness will be taken into account. Yet, he *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* wholeheartedly and devotedly obeyed it and thereby observed full and perfect ‘*We Hear and We Obey*’ towards Allāh ‘*azza wa jalla* and His Words.
- f. When the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* commanded them to say, “We hear and obey, (we seek) Your forgiveness, our *Rabb!* And unto You is the return,” the Companions *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum* obeyed the command wholeheartedly, even though now they knew with certainty that the meaning they understood from the verse was accurate. Yet, they obeyed the Messenger of Allāh and kept repeating, “We hear and we obey, (we seek) Your forgiveness, our *Rabb!* And unto You is the return” **until their hearts and minds began to accept the reality that their whispers and sporadic thoughts will be taken into account.** After they consciously and wholeheartedly surrendered and accepted this reality, ONLY then did these words become light upon their tongues.
- g. The wisdom behind this incident is that Allāh ‘*azza wa jalla* wanted to illustrate to each and every Muslim the reality of the heart of our beloved Prophet *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and the hearts of the *Ṣaḥābah raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum*. They had hearts and minds that would wholeheartedly and consciously surrender and obey Allāh *jalla jalāluhu* and His Messenger with love, devotion and appreciation. **Even when they knew with certitude that some of the commands were beyond their ability!** What a devoted and obedient heart they all had!! They undeniably passed the test with *iḥsān* (excellence).
- h. Only when they obeyed this reality consciously and wholeheartedly were the next verses revealed, “Allāh burdens no soul save what it is capable of...” thus abrogating the portion of the verse “...and whether you disclose that which is in yourself or conceal it, Allāh will call you to account according to it...”
- i. The *Ṣaḥābah* had a heart which kindled, directed and governed itself with obedience of love, devotion and appreciation to every letter of the *Wahyī*. Only when the Muslims have a conscious, big heart like that of the *Ṣaḥābah* towards this very *Wahyī*, can they truly achieve and attain the true serenity, joy and success as the *Ṣaḥābah* attained for themselves in this life, and most importantly, the next eternal one.

This characteristic of “We hear and we obey” within a person is a must if they truly want to be a believer of Allāh *jalla jalāluhu* and His final Messenger Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. It is one of the primary intuitions and character of a Muslim. For this reason, Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā* mentions this character alongside *īmān* in Him:

“The only statement of the *mu'minīn* (believers) when they are called to Allāh and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say, “We hear and we obey.” And those are the only ones whom are successful.”³

“It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allāh and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should (thereafter) have any choice about the affair. And whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error.”⁴

“The Messenger believes in that which is sent down unto him from his *Rabb*, and so do the *mu'minūn* (believers). Each one believes in Allāh and His Angels and His Books and His Messengers, saying, ‘We differentiate not between any of His Messengers, and they (*mu'minūn*) say, ‘We hear and we obey,’ (we seek) Your forgiveness, our *Rabb*! And unto You is the return.”⁵

In the above verse, Allāh *jalla wa 'alā* honours the *mu'minīn* by associating the *īmān* of the Messenger with the *īmān* of the believers, due to the *mu'minūn* having this specific intuition and character of “We hear and obey.” Meaning, this intuition and character is one of the core characteristics and essences of *īmān* of the Messenger himself *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. And since you all also have the same intuition and character, at least at the apparent level, you all can be associated with his *īmān ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. Allāhu Akbar!! What an honour for the *mu'minūn*!

One cannot even believe in the *Shahādah* (the Testimony of Faith) unless and until they have the intuition and character of “We hear and obey” towards the Testimony itself. And thus, everything that negates this very Testimony was detested, abandoned and disobeyed, and everything that affirms and establishes this Testimony was beloved, obeyed and competed to be established.

Within the *bay'ah* (pledge, covenant), the Messenger *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* unequivocally mentioned this exact message:

‘Ubādah bin al-Ṣāmit reported that we swore allegiance to Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* to hear and obey, in difficulty and in prosperity, in hardship and in ease.⁶

The Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said while a group of his companions were around him, “Swear allegiance to me for:

1. Not to join anything in worship along with Allāh.
2. Not to steal.
3. Not to commit fornication.
4. Not to kill your children.
5. Not to slander others by forging false statements and spreading it.

³ 24:51.

⁴ 33:36.

⁵ 2:285.

⁶ Al-Bukāhri & Muslim.

6. Not to disobey me in anything good.

Whoever among you fulfils his pledge will be rewarded by Allāh. And whoever indulges in any one of them receives the punishment in this world. That punishment will be expiation for that sin. And if one indulges in any of them, and Allāh conceals his sin, it is up to Him to forgive or punish him.” ‘Ubādah bin al-Şāmit said, “So we swore allegiance for these.”⁷

This “We hear we obey” understanding and mindset was nothing new. Every prophet and messenger commanded their fellow Companions with it, “Have *taqwā* of Allāh and Obey (me).”⁸

This Ummah is not bounded by generation, time and place. This great Ummah is bound by īmān, tawḥīd, taqwā, obedience, and inner and outer exalted characteristics and manners. They deserve no less than an eternal life of bliss within Jannah with The Eternally Perfect One, Allāh jalla jalāluhu subḥānahu wa ta’ālā. The roof of their Jannah is the ‘Arsh of Al-Raḥmān ‘azza wa jalla!

True submission (*al-inqiyād*) and obedience of the heart cannot take place except with pure love and deep devotion. The obedience of the Companions towards the commands and prohibitions were not like the general obedience of a slave to his master, or the obedience of a soldier to his commander. Rather, their obedience was an obedience of true love, complete *riḍā* and appreciation, an obedience of an awakened heart full of life and a conscious mind, “And (yet), among the people are those who take other than Allāh as equals (to Him). They love them as they (should) love Allāh. But those who believe are more intense in their love for Allāh.”⁹ “Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, the commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger and *jihād* in His cause, then wait until Allāh executes His command. And Allāh does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”¹⁰

This love was coming from their side i.e. from the *Şaḥābah* towards Allāh *jalla jalāluhu* and His Messenger *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. Rather, the *Şaḥābah* knew very well that Allāh *jalla Jalāluhu* Himself loves them eternally, more than they can ever imagine, and so does the Messenger *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, “O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion — Allāh will bring forth (in place of them) a people He will love and who will love Him, (who are) humble towards the believers, powerful against the disbelievers, they strive in the cause of Allāh, and do not fear the blame of the blamers. That is the favour of Allāh. He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allāh is *Wās’i Al-‘Alīm*.”¹¹

⁷ Al-Bukāhri & Muslim.

⁸ 26:108-179.

⁹ 2:165.

¹⁰ 9:24.

¹¹ 5:54.

“Say: If you love Allāh then follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allāh is *Ghafūr Raḥīm*.”¹²

“(Allāh) said, ‘O Yaḥyā, take the Scripture with determination.’ And We gave him judgement (while yet) a boy, and affection from Us and purity, and he had *taqwā* of Allāh.”¹³

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer, (he is) concerned over you, and to the believers is kind and merciful.”¹⁴

What follows are some examples of the love and the devotion the Prophets and the *ṣāliḥūn* had for Allāh *jalla jalāluhu*:

- Only Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā* knows how heavy the hearts of our Father Ādam and our Mother *‘alayhimā as-salām* were after eating from the tree, and how deeply they were consumed with sadness and sorrow. They must have been incredibly worried and stressed. A moment before they were the dearest and the closest people to Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā*. Their hearts were in delight since their existence was in complete serenity and they had been experiencing the highest sweetness of *īmān*. And then, in the space of a moment, they find themselves distant and confused *‘alayhimā as-salām*. How loss for words must they have been, owing to the fact that a being can take an oath with the Name of Allāh and then lie (*iblis*)! Only Allāh *taqaddasa ismuḥu* knows how many days and years they wept, begged, called Allāh *‘azza wa jalla*, and how many times they repented to Him *jalla thanā’uhu* for that one unintended mistake. In due course, Allāh *‘azza wa jalla* revealed a *du‘ā* for them, which summarises and expresses their feelings of regret, sadness and worry:

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

“They said, ‘Our *Rabb*, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the great losers.’”¹⁵

One can sense in this *du‘ā* of theirs a feeling of deep regret — it was of such magnitude that their experience of this act felt like an act of oppression by their own hands. It was enough to cause them to forget all their previous good deeds — all because of this one unintentional mistake. An indescribable sadness and sorrow such that they believed they may not be forgiven nor shown mercy; and unimaginable stress and worry to the extent that they believed they may be among the eternal losers. This *du‘ā* and their reality clearly demonstrate how much they truly loved Allāh *jalla jalāluhu* and how devoted they were to attain His

¹² 3:31.

¹³ 19:13-14.

¹⁴ 9:128.

¹⁵ 7:23.

Riḍā. It also demonstrates their detest of falling into an unintended mistake that violates His Command to the degree that our father, Ādam, will feel shy to intercede for the Judgment to commence on the *qiyāmah* day. He will refuse to intercede. In fact, he will weep in front of the entire creation because of this mistake although he has been completely forgiven of it. What an obedient and devoted heart!

- One can see the same devotion and obedience exhibited by Ibrāhīm *‘alayhi al-salām* in the many incidents that took place in his long life, particularly when he said, “Indeed, I will go to my *Rabb*; He will guide me.”¹⁶

In this verse, one can easily sense Ibrāhīm’s true love and yearning to be with Allāh *jalla Jalāluhu*. He is leaving his dearest parents, family and friends, his people and everything that he loved and everyone that he knew. And yet all this to Ibrāhīm was nothing to be concerned about when compared to “going to Allāh” and being taken care of directly by Him *‘azza wa jalla*.

The second incident which reiterated his pure love and absolute devotion to Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā* was when there came to him the command to sacrifice Ismā‘īl (his son). How devoted he must have been to sacrifice his own flesh and blood in front of his own two eyes with his own two hands entirely for the One he purely loved! Allāh *jalla thanā’uhu* saw in Ibrāhīm unconditional, unwavering and unrelenting love for Him and so He rewarded him with the cherished eternal attribute of *khalīl* (an intimate friend of Allāh *subḥānahu wa ta‘ālā*), “And Allāh took unto Himself Ibrāhīm as a *khalīl*.”¹⁷

The awe-inspiring thing is that Allāh ‘azza wa jalla knew since eternity the pure love Ibrāhīm possessed for Him. However, He wanted it to be expressed in a way that all of creation bears witness to Ibrāhīm’s breath-taking, pure love and absolute devotion that was hidden within the pure heart of Ibrāhīm.

- The deep love and absolute devotion of Mūsā *‘alayhi al-salām* is clearly displayed when he said, “And I hastened to You, my *Rabb*, that You be pleased”¹⁸ and “My *Rabb*, show me Yourself that I may look at You.”¹⁹
- The perfect love and the utmost appreciation deeply rooted in the heart of Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* is witnessed through his life long deeds. It suffices to mention just one event that demonstrates this.

After *Sūrah al-Naṣr* was revealed, saying, “Then exalt (Him) with praise of your *Rabb* and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever accepting of

¹⁶ 37:99.

¹⁷ 4:125.

¹⁸ 20:84.

¹⁹ 7:123.

repentance,” he *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* would stand the night repeating the *tasbīḥ*, *taḥmīd* and *istighfār* in his *qiyām*, *ruku‘u*, and *sujūd*. He *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* continued reciting the *adhkār* and continued performing *qiyāmul-layl* relentlessly—at the then age of 60 onwards—such that his feet would swell. His honoured body *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* was completely adapted to performing *qiyāmul-layl* as he was performing it throughout his Prophetic life, and therefore, in order for his feet to visibly swell due to *qiyāmul-layl* suggests the length of his standing and *ruku‘u*. When it was said to him that all his past and future mistakes are forgiven, the heart that was worshipping and obeying Allāh *jalla thanā’uhu* out of perfect love, utmost devotion, and comprehensive appreciation replied, “Shall I not then be a grateful worshipper?”

The stories of the extraordinary obedience of the *ṣāliḥīn* and their love for Allāh are astonishingly remarkable. Consider the following exemplaries:

- Āsya, the wife of pharaoh.
- The *māshiṭah* (hair dresser) of the daughter of pharaoh.
- The magicians of pharaoh who repented and their incredibly determined obedience to Allāh.
- The young boy in the story of *Sūrah al-Burūj*. And the mother of the baby in that story.
- The companions of the cave in *Sūrah al-Kahf*.
- The 3 companions who were trapped in a cave.

Further applications of this principle and mindset

What follows are some examples of the dedicated obedience of the *Ṣaḥābah – raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum*:

- ‘Urwah bin Mas‘ūd narrated the love and obedience he witnessed at hands of the companions during the summit with the Messenger of Allāh in the Treaty of *Hudaybiyah*. This incident eloquently captures the immense love the Companions had for Allāh *jalla thanā’uhu* and His Messenger *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*:

‘Urwah said, “O people! By Allāh, I have witnessed kings including Caesar, Khosrau and An-Najashi, yet I have never seen any of them respected by their courtiers as much as Muḥammad is respected by his companions. By Allāh, if he spat, the spittle would not fall except in the hand of one of them who would rub it on his face and skin; if he ordered them, they would carry out his order immediately; if he performed ablution, they would wrestle to take the remains of his water; and when they spoke, they would lower their voices and would not stare at his face for long out of respect and awe.”²⁰

²⁰ Al-Bukhārī.

- When the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* intended to set out to come upon the caravan of Abū Sufyān prior to the battle of Badr, he sought counsel with the Companions. He, in particular, wanted to know if the Companions from the *Anṣār* would leave Al-Madīnah and march forth with him, and fight and defend him if need be (as fighting for him *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and defending him outside Al-Madīnah was not stipulated in the *bay‘ah* or covenant with the *Anṣār*). S‘ad bin ‘Ubādah, the leader of the *Anṣār*, spoke on behalf of his people.

Anas narrated that when (the news of) the advance of Abū Sufyān (at the head of a force) reached him, the Messenger of Allāh held consultations with his Companions. Abū Bakr spoke (expressing his strategy) but he (the Prophet) did not consider it. Then ‘Umar spoke (expressing his strategy) but he did not consider it. Then S‘ad bin ‘Ubādah stood up and said, “O Messenger of Allāh, you want us (to speak). By Allāh, in Whose Hand is my life, if you order us to plunge our horses into the sea, we would do so. If you order us to drive our horses to the most distant place like Bark al-Ghimād, we would do so.” The narrator said, “Now the Messenger of Allāh called on the people (for the encounter).” So they set out and camped at Badr.²¹

It was as though S‘ad bin ‘Ubādah was not only expressing the feeling and the devotion of the *Anṣār*, but was also expressing the feeling and devotion of all Muslims of all generations. The *Anṣār* were true to their deep love and complete obedience to Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* – not only by way of words and slogans, but also by deed and sacrifice. They sacrificed greatly for this *Dīn* such that the Messenger of Allāh said, “The *Anṣār*, no one loves them save a *mu‘min* (believer), and no one dislikes them save a hypocrite. Whosoever loves them, Allāh loves him, and whosoever dislikes them, Allāh dislikes him.”²² *Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum*.

This devoted obedience was not only seen in men alone. The very same can be said about the female companions. In fact, some of them exceeded the men in their deep love, concern and complete obedience to Allāh *‘azza wa jalla* and His Messenger *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*.

Khadījah *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā* is the first Muslim. Sumayyah *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā* is the first martyr. These two facts alone speak volumes! The lives of these two great women, their patience and sacrifice are sufficient to demonstrate the realities of the other great female companions *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhunna*.

What follows are a few examples of their deep love and complete obedience to Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*:

²¹ Muslim.

²² Al-Bukhārī & Muslim.

- Julaybīb *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu* was one of the most beloved companions to the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. The Messenger of Allāh sent forth a proposal to an *Anṣārī* family for the hand of their beloved and beautiful daughter. When they were informed that it was for Julaybīb, they became hesitant due to his physical appearance. After the father discussed the matter with his wife, they decided to decline the proposal. Just when the father was about to set out to inform the Messenger of Allāh about their decision, their daughter from behind the veil spoke with these astonishing words,

أَتَرُدُّونَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَمْرَهُ؟! ادْفَعُونِي إِلَيْهِ ، فَإِنَّهُ لَنْ يُضَيِّعَنِي

“Are you refusing the command of the Messenger of Allāh?! Push me to him. No doubt, he will not misplace me.”

What trust! What obedience! What *īmān*! And what a heart!

Due to her deep love and complete obedience, the Messenger of Allāh made a specific *du‘ā* (supplication) for her,

اللَّهُمَّ ، صَبِّ عَلَيَّهَا [الْخَيْرَ] صَبًّا ، وَلَا تَجْعَلْ عَيْشَهَا كَدًّا

“O Allāh pour upon her a perfect pouring (of all good), and do not make her living difficult.”

Anas *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu* commented at the end of this *ḥadīth*, saying that she received a line of proposals from the greatest and most prosperous companions after the martyrdom of Julaybīb, and that he witnessed her to be one of the most affluent and comfortable women in Al-Madīnah.

No sooner after their marriage, the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* went out to engage in a campaign. After the battle, he sat amongst the fighters and asked for the missing or the dead. They mentioned some names. He asked again if there was anyone else missing or dead. They replied in the negative. He then said, “But I miss Julaybīb.” The *Ṣaḥābah* then searched for him. They found him a martyr amongst seven *mushrikīn*. They then informed the Messenger of Allāh. He *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* personally went to the place where Julaybīb laid and witnessed what had occurred. He said, “He (Julaybīb) killed seven and then was killed. He is of me and I am of him. He is of me and I am of him. He is of me and I am of him.” He said this thrice. Then the Messenger of Allāh lifted him up with his noble hands as if he was placing him upon a bed, and placed him in a grave with his own two hands.²³

Another illustration of the female companions’ deep love and complete obedience to Allāh and His Messenger is clearly witnessed in the statement of ‘Ā’ishah, “When this verse was revealed: ‘and that they dress their veils over

²³ *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Aḥmad narrated this incident in full whilst Muslim mentioned a portion of it with the same chain.

their chests,” [24:31] they (women) hastened and tore from the extra part of their lower garments, and used those pieces to cover their hair, faces and chests.”²⁴

They did not even wait for the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* to explain to them or show them what to do. What pure and devoted hearts!

Some of the female companions even shielded and defended the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* with their own bodies in the battlefield like Umm ‘Imārah *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā*. In Uḥud, her husband and two sons all went out to the battlefield with the Messenger of Allāh. When the battle was being lost and Khālid bin Walīd was striking blows within the ranks of the Companions, and many were fleeing, a handful of *Ṣaḥābah* encircled the Messenger of Allāh, shielding him from the fierce attack. The Messenger *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* was injured during the attack.

Umm ‘Imārah, seeing the dire situation, left the campsite, grabbed hold of a sword, a bow and some arrows and raced towards the fighting. Striking the attackers with her arrows she reached the Messenger of Allāh. She then unsheathed her sword and valiantly defended him against the enemy.

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said that he heard the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* say on the day of Uḥud, “I did not turn right or left except I saw her fighting, defending me.” She suffered 13 injuries to her body. There was a major wound on her shoulder.

In the heat of the battle, news reached her that one of her sons was killed, yet she continued shielding the Messenger. Seeing this he said to her:

وَمَنْ يُطِيقُ مَا تُطِيقِينَ يَا أُمَّ عِمْرَةَ

“And who can endure what you are enduring O Umm ‘Imārah?!”

The killer of her son began to race towards the Messenger of Allāh. She was informed by the Prophet that this is the killer of her son. No sooner he said that, she attacked the *mushrik’s* horse and killed him. Witnessing this, the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* began making *du‘ā* for her and her family.

When she heard him making *du‘ā*, she requested, “Ask Allāh to make us close companions of yours in *Jannah*,” and so he said, “O Allāh make them my near companions in *Jannah*.”

Upon hearing the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* supplicating for her and her family, it was as though her grief and pain was forgotten, she said with joy,

مَا أَبَالِي مَا أَصَابَتْنِي مِنَ الدُّنْيَا

²⁴ Al-Bukhārī.

“I do not care what afflicts me of pain in *dunyā*”.

It is not obligatory upon women to fight. What then made Umm ‘Imārah race to shield the Messenger of Allāh with her flesh and blood? No doubt, it was due to her immense love of Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā* and His Messenger *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, and it was also due to her being one of the two women who were there at *Bay‘atul-‘Aqabah* (the covenant prior to the *ḥijrah*) wherein they all pledged to protect and defend the Messenger of Allāh. On the day of Uḥud, she shielded the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* more than many other great men, and thus perfectly fulfilled her pledge and covenant. May Allāh *jalla thanā’uhu* reward her eternally with that which satisfies her heart and eyes. *Āmīn!*

When the verses prohibiting alcohol were revealed, capped with “... are you not going to desist and abstain?”²⁵ ‘Umar, who used to love drinking in *Jāhiliyyah*, echoed what he and others felt, saying:

اَسْتَيْسَا يَا رَبِّ

“We have desisted, O *Rabb*.”²⁶

In some occasions, the *Ṣaḥābah* took the command of the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* in a remarkably literal way, due to their etiquette with him *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*:

Abū Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said on the Day of Khaybar, “I shall certainly give this standard in the hand of one who loves Allāh and his Messenger. Allāh will grant victory at his hand.” ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said, “Never did I want leadership except that day. I advanced towards him in hope that I may be called for this” but the Messenger of Allāh called ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and conferred (this honour) upon him and said, “**March on and do not look about (nor turn back)** until Allāh grants you victory.” ‘Alī took the standard and marched forward and then halted, **he did not look about (nor turned around but stood as he was)** and said in a loud voice, “O Messenger of Allāh! On what issue should I fight the people?” He (the Prophet) replied, “Fight them until they bear testimony to the reality that there is no deity but Allāh and Muḥammad is his Messenger, and if they do that then their blood and their riches are safe from your hands except what is permitted by law, and their reckoning is with Allāh.”²⁷

Obviously, “do not turn about (nor turn your back)” meant do not flee from the battlefield. However, ‘Alī *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu* out of sheer etiquette did not even turn around to ask the question! He followed the Command to the very letter! *Allāhu Akbar!* What an astonishing and remarkable obedience to even the literal word of the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam!*

²⁵ 5:90-91.

²⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Ḥākim.

²⁷ Muslim.

It is reported that Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* was delivering the Friday *Khuṭbah* and a man from the congregation stood up to stretch his legs. The Prophet said to him, “Sit.” At that very moment, ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd was coming to the Masjid, he happened to hear that very statement from the Messenger of Allāh. Unaware that that command was not addressed to him, he immediately sat down where he was. He sat down outside the *masjid* in the scorching heat. He was sweating profusely and began to experience sunburn, yet he did not move.

After the *ṣalāh*, the *Ṣaḥābah* were astonished to see ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd in that state. After hearing his reason they explained that the order to sit was directed at someone else. Even then ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd did not move from his place because he wanted to hear it directly from the Messenger of Allāh. Eventually, the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* came out and to his surprise saw Ibn Mas‘ūd sitting in the midday heat. Upon hearing Ibn Mas‘ūd explain his reason for doing so, he *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* smiled and said, “Come O ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd, for you is Paradise.”²⁸

A similar narration is reported about ‘Abdullāh bin Rawāḥah and at the end the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said to him:

زَادَكَ اللَّهُ حِرْصًا عَلَى طَوَاعِيَةِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

“May Allāh increase you in your determination on the obedience of Allāh and His Messenger.”²⁹

In some occasions, they would leave engaging in matters that were permissible for them. ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abbās reported that the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* saw a man wearing a gold ring on his hand. He pulled it off and threw it away saying, “One of you is wishing for a burning ember from Hell to be put on his hand.” It was said to the man after the Messenger of Allāh had left, “Take your ring (of gold) and derive benefit out of it,” whereupon he said, “No, by Allāh, I would never take it when the Messenger of Allāh has thrown it away.”³⁰

The *Ṣaḥābī* could have gifted this gold ring to his wife, daughter or to any Muslim woman. But he refused. And he did not merely refrain from benefiting from it, he went further and refused to even pick it up! Why this astonishing character? Because this Companion understood it very simply: how could I pick up the same ring which was taken off my finger and thrown by the noble hands of my most beloved?!

The amazing thing about the obedience of the *Ṣaḥābah* was not simply the fact that they would completely give up their own rights whilst they themselves were in need of them, it was just as much if not more due to their remarkable etiquette and love towards the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*.

²⁸ Abū Dāwūd & others.

²⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Bayhaqī.

³⁰ Muslim.

What's more, they would quickly obey and hasten to execute his indications and not just his explicit commandments. The following incident clearly illustrates this characteristic.

K'ab ibn Mālik narrated that he asked Ibn Abī Hadrad to pay the debts which he owed him. They were in the mosque and their voices became so loud that the Messenger of Allāh heard them while he was in his house. He *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* lifted the curtain and called, "O K'ab bin Mālik!" He replied, "Labbayk, O Messenger of Allāh." He gestured with his hand to reduce the debt by half. K'ab said, "O Messenger of Allaah, I have done it." The Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* then said (to Ibn Hadrad), "Get up and pay it."³¹

They would sometimes follow and obey the actions and movements of the Messenger of Allāh even if they did not know the reasons behind them.

'Abdullāh bin 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* once wore a gold ring and so the Companions also wore one. He then took it off and threw it away and said, "I will never wear it again," and so the Companions also threw their gold rings away.³²

The following incident clearly shows that the Companions would follow and obey every movement of the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* irrespective of whether they knew the reasons behind them or not.

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī narrates that whilst the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was leading his companions in prayer, he took off his shoes and placed them to his left. When the people saw that, they took off their shoes. After finishing the prayer, the Messenger of Allāh said, "What made you take off your shoes?" They said, "We saw you take off your shoes, so we took off our shoes." He *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* explained, "Jibrīl came to me and informed me that there was some dirt on them." And he said, "When one of you comes to the mosque, let him check his shoes. If he sees any dirt on them, let him wipe them and (then) pray in them."³³

When they saw that the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had taken off his shoes during the prayer, they immediately took off their shoes without even waiting for the prayer to finish in order to enquire why and for whom.

This understanding of following and obeying every revealed movement of the Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* can be summarised by the statement of 'Umar *radīyallāhu 'anhu* when he kissed the Black Stone:

عَنْ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ جَاءَ إِلَى الْحَجَرِ الْأَسْوَدِ فَقَبَّلَهُ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ حَجَرٌ لَا تَضُرُّ وَلَا تَنْفَعُ وَلَوْلَا أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقْبَلُكَ مَا قَبَّلْتُكَ

³¹ Al-Bukhārī & Muslim.

³² Al-Bukhārī.

³³ *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Abū Dāwūd.

“With certitude I know you are only a stone. You cannot benefit nor harm (negating the belief of the polytheists regarding idols). And if I hadn’t seen the Prophet *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* kiss you, I would never have kissed you.”³⁴

Obeying Allah and His Messenger like the way the Companions did throughout their lives cannot be done except through complete *īmān* and pure love. Only then can we find therein the sweetness which the *Ṣaḥābah* found. The Messenger of Allāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* made this point very clear:

ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ مِنْ خَلَاوَةِ الْإِيمَانِ مَنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا وَأَنْ يُحِبَّ الْمَرْءَ لَا يُحِبُّهُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ وَأَنْ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَعُودَ فِي الْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ أَنْ أَنْقَذَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يُقْذَفَ فِي النَّارِ

“There are three things, if a person has them, he has found the sweetness of faith: (1) if Allāh and His Messenger are more beloved to him than anyone or anything else; (2) if he loves another then he does not love him for any reason other than Allāh; (3) and if he would hate to return to *kufṛ* after Allāh had saved him from it just as much as he would hate to be thrown in the fire.”³⁵

Allāh *‘azza wa jalla* and His Messenger *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* can only be more beloved to the Muslims when they know with certitude that Allāh *jalla thanā’uhu* has Willed and Wants well for them. He has Willed for them nothing but an eternal, blissful and joyful existence with Him *jalla jalāluhu*, “Allāh is calling to the abode of eternal bliss... those whom do well, for them is The Beautiful (Paradise), and more (seeing the Face of Allāh *jalla jalāluhu subḥānahu wa ta’ālā*).”³⁶

On his death bed, the Messenger of Allāh when presented the choice to remain in this *dunyā* or be elevated to the eternal life and to his *Rabb ‘azza wa jalla*, expressed the feeling of all the Prophets who preceded him when he said:

اللَّهُمَّ الرَّفِيقَ الْأَعْلَى

“O Allāh! The Highest Companion.”³⁷

The yearning which the Companions *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum* had of Allāh and His Messenger is beautifully portrayed in the story of Bilāl. When he travelled to Al-Madīnah, he was approached by the two grandsons of *Rasūlullāh*, Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥusayn, to give the *adhān*. No sooner did Bilāl perform the call to prayer except that the sound of weeping could be heard throughout the vicinity. The Companions flowed with tears reminiscing the nights and days they spent with *Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* who was once living and walking among them! And in memory of the times when Allāh *jalla jalāluhu* would speak to them through His Messengers, Jibrīl and Muḥammad, *ṣalawātullāhi wa salāmuḥu ‘alayhimā*.

³⁴ Al-Bukhārī & Muslim.

³⁵ Al-Bukhārī & Muslim.

³⁶ 10:25-26.

³⁷ Al-Bukhārī & Muslim.

On his death bed, Bilāl *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu* when going through the agonies of death, his wife entered and uncovered his face and remarked, “What a sorrow that has inflicted us!” Bilāl *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu* in those last moments of pain and agony replied, “Do not say: ‘What a sorrow has inflicted us.’ Rather, say: ‘What a joy that has come upon us’” and then he continued to say:

عَدَا أَلْقَى الْأَحِبَّةَ مُحَمَّدٌ وَحِزْبُهُ

“Tomorrow, I meet my beloved: Muḥammad and his Companions.”

May Allāh *jalla wa ‘alā* grant us the *tawfīq* to feel, understand and obey Allāh *jalla thanā’uhu* and His Messenger *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* as the Companions did. *Āmīn!*

والحمد لله رب العلمين، وصلى الله وسلم على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وأزواجه وأصحابه
ومن تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين