

Taj al-'Arus

By Sayyidi Shaykh Ibn 'Ata Allah al-Sakandari

Translation excerpt

Page 9-13:

If you desire repentance, it is necessary upon you not to be void of reflection throughout your life. Reflect on what you have done during your day. If you find obedience, show gratitude to Allah (تبارك وتعالى) for it. If you find disobedience, reproach yourself for that and seek forgiveness from Allah (تبارك وتعالى) and repent to Him. There is no session with Allah (تبارك وتعالى) that is more beneficial to you than a session in which you reproach yourself. Do not reproach it laughing and cheerful. Rather, reproach it in a hardworking and sincere manner, showing a frown and being sad hearted, defeated, and lowly. If you do this, Allah (تبارك وتعالى) will replace your sadness with joy, low state with high rank, darkness with light, and veiling with unveiling.

It is narrated from Ashaikh Makeenuddin al-Asmar, may Allah (تبارك وتعالى) have mercy on him – and he was of the seven abdal – that he said, “When I was in my beginning stages, I would sew and obtain my sustenance from this. I would count my words during the day and when evening came, I would reckon myself and find my words few. Whatever good I found in it, I praised Allah (تبارك وتعالى) and thanked Him. Whatever I found aside from this, I repented to Allah (تبارك وتعالى) and asked for forgiveness.” This occurred until he became a badal, may Allah (تبارك وتعالى) have mercy on him.

Know that if you had an agent who reckons his self and brings it into account, you will not reckon him due to his reckoning of it. If the agent does not bring his self to account, you would reckon him and bring him into account and exaggerate in this reckoning. Based on this, it is necessary for all your action to be completely for the sake of Allah (تبارك وتعالى). Also, you should not think that you perform an action and Allah (تبارك وتعالى) will not reckon you and bring you to account.

If a slave commits an offence, an act of disobedience is like fire and the darkness that results from it is like the fire's smoke. Were one to ignite a fire in a home for 70 years, would you not think that it would blacken? Similarly, this is the state of the heart that blackens with an act of disobedience and it is not purified except through repenting to Allah (تبارك وتعالى). It is that the low state, darkness, and veiling is accompanied with disobedience. So, if you repent to Allah (تبارك وتعالى) the traces of sin are removed.

Negligence does not befall you except through your negligence in emulating the Prophet ﷺ. Elevation will not happen to you from Allah (تبارك وتعالى) except through emulating the Prophet ﷺ. Emulating him ﷺ is divided into two parts: external and internal.

The external section consists of salah, siyam, zakah, hajj, jihad, and others.

The internal section is for one to perform salah as if he sees Allah (تبارك وتعالى) and reflect during Qur'anic recitation. If you perform an act of obedience such as salah and Qur'anic recitation and you do not find that you are doing so as if you see Allah and in a state of reflection, know that in you is an internal disease such as arrogance or self-admiration, or a disease other than this. Allah (تبارك وتعالى) said:

[I shall turn away from My Ayat (verses of the Qur'an) those who behave arrogantly on the earth, without a right], 7:146.

Your state will be like he who has a fever and finds that sugar is bitter when put in his mouth. Disobedience while being in a state of lowliness and need is better than obedience while being in a state of power and arrogance. Allah (تبارك وتعالى) said in a story about prophet Ibrahim the Friend, upon him and upon our prophet Mohammad is the best blessings and most complete peace:

[But whoso follows me, he verily is of me], 14:36.

It is understood from this that whoever did not follow him is not of him. Allah (تبارك وتعالى) also said in a story about Noah, upon him and upon our prophet Mohammad is the best blessings and peace:

[Verily, my son is of my family!], 11:45.

Subhanna wa ta'alla responded to him by saying:

[He said: "O Nuh (Noah)! Surely, he is not of your family; verily his work is unrighteous], 11:46.

Emulating one makes the one who emulates as if he is part of he one being emulated even if the emulator is a stranger. An example of this is Salman al-Farsi, may Allah (تبارك وتعالى) be pleased with him as the Prophet ﷺ said:

[Salman is of us, the people of **Prophetic household**]

It is known that Salman is of the people of Persia but through emulating, the Prophet ﷺ said this about him to **teach us**. The same way emulating establishes a connection, a lack of it establishes separation.

Allah (تبارك وتعالى) collected all good in a house and made the key to the home emulating the Prophet ﷺ. This emulation is by being content with what sustenance Allah (تبارك وتعالى) provides, abstinence and decreasing of worldliness, and leaving what does not concern one from words and actions. Whoever the door of emulations is opened for, this is a proof of Allah's (تبارك وتعالى) love for him. تعالى said:

[Say (O Muhammad ﷺ) to mankind: "If you (really) love Allah then follow me (i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah), Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.], 3:31.

If you seek all of goodness, say “Oh Allah I ask you to have me emulate the Prophet ﷺ in words and actions. Whoever desires this should not oppress the servants of Allah in their honor and lineage. If servants are safe from one another’s oppression, they would spring to Allah (تبارك وتعالى). However, they are held back like a person overwhelmed by debt and who seeks the debt.

Know that if you were a special individual of a king, close to him and someone came to seek a debt from you, you would be burdened were it only in a light, insignificant way. Then, how would your state be if the Day of Judgment arrives and 100,000 people or more ask their different debt from you such as money, dishonoring family honor, and other than this?

Page 13-18:

The truly afflicted one is the one whose sins and low desires wipe him out until they made him like a small worn-out water skin. This individual is the deplorable one whose food and low desires went to fill the toilet and please his wife. If only it had been permissible!

The first of stages is repentance. What comes after it is not accepted save through it.

The example of a slave who performs an act of disobedience is like a new vessel. Fire is ignited under it for some time and it blackens. If you hasten to wash it it is cleaned from that blackness. If you leave it and cook in it time after time the blackness is fixed in it until it breaks. At this point, washing it will be of no benefit. Repentance is what washes the blackness of the heart until deeds surface with the fragrance of acceptance. Ask from Allah (تبارك وتعالى) to allow you to perform repentance at all times. If you succeed in gaining this, **your time becomes pleasant** because this is a talent that Allah (تبارك وتعالى) places in whoever servants He wills. It may be that a slave with cracked skin on his heels will gain it but not his master. Also, a woman can obtain it but not her husband, a young man but not an older man. If you obtain it, Allah (تبارك وتعالى) loves you. {Truly, Allah loves those who turn to Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.} 2:222.

An individual feels ghibtah (to desire another’s state without desiring for this state to be removed from him) for something if he understands its value. If you distribute rubies amongst beasts, barley would be more beloved to them. Look and see which of the two groups you belong to. If you repent, you are amongst the loved and if you do not repent you are amongst the oppressors. Allah (تبارك وتعالى) says {And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed thalimun (wrong doers, etc).} 49:11.

Whoever repents, succeeds and whoever does not repent is at loss. Do not **break** your despair and say: So many are the times I repent and break my repentance with disobedience. The ill individual has hope for life so long as his soul is in his body.

If the servant repents, his home in Paradise becomes happy. Also, the skies and Earth become happy. So does the Prophet ﷺ. Allah, subhannah, is not pleased for you to be merely a lover. **He will make you beloved. How great is the difference between the status of a lover and the beloved!**

Wo to a servant who knows the good favors of one who does him good and dares to disobey him! The individual who does not truly understand His goodness (تبارك وتعالى) prefers to disobey Him. The individual who does not attentively observe Him with fear does not truly know his rank. The individual who is preoccupied with and follows other than Him, knowing that his lower self invites him to destruction, does not succeed. This individual knows that his heart invites him to guidance and disobeys it. He also knows the rank of the One he disobeys (تبارك وتعالى) and confronts him with disobedience. Had he truly known His Greatness, he would not have confronted him with his disobedience. He knew the closeness of his Master and that He (تبارك وتعالى) sees him, yet hastens to what is forbidden. He knows the effect of the sin that this life and the next are built on, hidden and shown, and did was not shy of his Lord. Had he known that he is in Allah's grip, he would not have met him in opposition.

Know that an act of disobedience entails breaking the covenant, untying the contract of love, preferring something to the Lord, obeying caprices, undressing the cloak of shyness, opposing Allah (تبارك وتعالى) with what He does not find pleasing. This includes other external signs of disobedience such as the appearance of stains on the limbs, stiffness in the eye, laziness in service, leaving the maintenance of respect, the appearance of the effects of low desires, and the disappearance of joy in obedience.

The inner effects are hardness of the heart, the lower self being stubborn, constriction due to low desires, the loss of sweetness in obedience, the conglomeration of other things that block the inner lights from appearing, the caprice obtaining the upper hand, and others of conglomeration of doubt and forgetting the place of return and long reckoning.

Had there not been to disobedience aside from an exchange in your title, that would suffice. If you are in a state of obedience, you are called the **approaching good-doer** and if you are in a state of disobedience your title is changed to the opposing sinner. This is concerning the exchange in your title, what do you think of the exchange of effect from the sweetness of obedience to the sweetness of sins and the enjoyment of service to the enjoyment of low desires?! This is concerning the exchange of effects, what do you think of the exchange in description? After you were described by Allah (تبارك وتعالى) with good characteristics, your situation is reversed and you are described with bad states. This is concerning the exchange of descriptions, what do you think of the exchange of ranks? After you were described by Allah (تبارك وتعالى) as one of the

righteous, you became of the people of corruption. After you were considered by Allah (تبارك وتعالى) of the people of God-fearingness, you became of the betrayers.

If sins are unfolding in your face, seek refuge from Allah (تبارك وتعالى), turn to Him, pour dirt on your head, and say: Oh Allah transfer me from the disgrace of disobedience to the honor of obedience. Also, visit the graves of the saints and righteous and say: Oh Most Merciful of Merciful!

Do you wish to struggle against your lower self as you strengthen it with low desires until it overcomes you?! How ignorant you are! The heart is a tree that is watered with the water of obedience and its fruit is what you find in the outcome: the eye's fruit is contemplation, the ear's fruit is listening to Qur'an, the tongue's fruit is remembrance, and the hands' and feet's fruit is seeking goodness. If the heart becomes dry, the fruit falls. If it becomes barren do much remembrances of Allah (تبارك وتعالى). Be not like the sick individual who says: I will not take medicine until I find a cure. It is said to him: you will not find a cure until you take medicine. Struggling does not come with sweetness. The only thing that comes with it is the spear heads of arrows. So, struggle against your lower self as this is the greatest struggle. Know that the mother who lost her child has no celebration. Rather, the celebration is for an individual who conquers himself. There is no celebration except for he who pulls together all his forces to struggle against his low desires.

Some individuals passed by a convent of a monk and said to him: Oh monk, when is the celebration of those monks? He said: the day Allah (تبارك وتعالى) forgives them.

p. 18-23

Your example with your lower self is like an individual who finds his wife in a wine tavern and brings her fine clothes and food instead of stopping her. This is similar to he whose lower self leaves ritual prayer and feeds it a variety of sweets.

For 40 years some individuals did not attend large **gatherings/prayer in congregation** because of foul scents they smelled from the hearts of those in a heedless state. How aware you are of the interest of this life and how ignorant you are of the interests of your next life! The example of this life to you is like two individuals. One goes to the country-side, works hard, and stores food for a later time. You, however, return with what brings you benefit at the current moment. If you store the snakes of lowly desire and scorpions of disobedience, you will perish. It is enough ignorance in you that others stored for for the future when they will need it and you stored acts of disobedience that harm you. Have you ever seen an individual who brings snakes and raises them in his home?! This is what you do.