

Shackle Your Inclinations

Alhamdulillah Thumma Alhamdulillah for the great blessing of living to reach Ramadhaan. A true blessing, a blessing many in their graves desperately wish to have an opportunity at. A blessing many onlookers will regret they did not take advantage of. Even though there is no specific proof on congratulating one another for the start of Ramadhaan, there is general proof on the permissibility of greeting one another in general matters upon receiving glad tiding and good news. We all know the story of Ka'b Ibn Maalik and his two partners, when Allah revealed their forgiveness after they were ordered by the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam to be abandoned and shunned.

In Surat at-Tawbah, Allah says:

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خُلِّفُوا... ﴿التوبة: ١١٨﴾

And [He also forgave] the three who were left behind [and regretted their error]. (Surat at-Tawbah: 118)

He declared that He has forgiven them. When it was revealed, people went to them in groups, congratulating them. Ibn al-Qayyim Rahimahullah said commenting on this story in Zaad al-Ma'ad (زاد المعاد), that it is proof that any Imaanic blessing is something one may embrace another on and congratulate him for. Ibn Muflih narrated many opinions that Imaam Ahmad said pertaining to this matter but at the end he said, the most popular opinion is that Imaam Ahmad permitted it.

Allah said:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿يونس: ٥٨﴾

Say: "In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy - in that let them rejoice; it is better than what they accumulate." (Surat Yunus: 58)

Having established that, I say may Allah bless your Ramadhaan and accept from you. May Allah honour you by granting you the opportunity to gain the most out of this Ramadhaan and may it be sincere for His sake. I ask Allah that you be among the special ones whose necks are marked as saved from the punishment of Hell.

We will have daily Khawaatir (خواتير) or reminders Inshaa Allah Ta'aala after Salat al-'Asr. I will try my best to keep them around ten minutes. They will be short so they will not take us away from our Ibaadah, because every second of your life is precious and more precious is every second of Ramadhaan. Putting these talks into action is the purpose of these talks and of all knowledge. It starts during the talk, when a verse is mentioned, imagine as if Allah is speaking to you and you are ready to act on it. When you hear a Hadith, imagine that the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam is before you and you are attentively listening, contemplating and ready to act upon it. When you hear a story of the Salaf, let your mind flow back to their time as if you are consulting them and sitting there enjoying their precious advice.

In Ramadhaan, the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam compared those who succeed and get their forgiveness from Allah like one whose neck is freed, which means like a slave that has been freed. Why this example or parable? In order to understand it, you have to understand the Fiqh rule. In divorce, marriage and freeing a slave, whether one is joking or serious there is no going back on it. If he says a woman is divorced (joking or serious) and if he frees a slave (joking or serious), there is no going back on it. If a human with all his deficient qualities cannot go back on freeing a slave when he does so, imagine the All Mighty, Al-Ghafoor, Ar-Raheem, Al-Kareem. If He frees your neck from Hell, do you think He will go back on His word? Ta'aal Allahu 'An Thaalika 'Aluwan Kabeera (تعالى الله عن ذلك علواً كبيراً).

This is the month where forgiveness comes to you from every angle. Not getting forgiveness from Allah in this month, means you worked hard not to get the forgiveness from Allah. As Ramadhaan starts, keep these three Hadith in your mind about attaining the forgiveness of Allah.

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

Whoever fasted for Ramadhaan in faith and seeking the reward from Allah, he will be forgiven. Two words in these Hadith, Imaan (إيماناً) and Ihtisaab (احتساباً). Imaan in all three of these Hadith, Ibn Hajr Rahimahullah said it is faith and knowing and believing it is obligatory upon you. Ihtisaab means that you are seeking the reward only from Allah. What reward are we talking about? Forgiveness from Allah. Does it stop there? No, certain people chosen that their necks be freed from Hellfire. Does it stop there? No, everyday you get golden moments where your Du'aa is accepted. Everyday you get mountains of deeds, only Allah calculates it for you. Everyday you fast, you are seventy years away from Hell if not more. If you finish Ramadhaan properly, seventy times thirty, you have two thousand and one hundred years away from Hell.

So the first Hadith says whoever fasts for the sake of Allah (Imaan and Ihtisaab for the sake of Allah), he gets forgiveness. The second Hadith has a near same ending but a different beginning.

مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

Let us say you had some type of deficiency in fasting, there is another shot at it, another opportunity to attain the forgiveness of Allah. Praying the nights, what we call Taraweeh.

There is even a third shot at it.

مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

Every one of the three Hadith is in the Sihaah. Let us say someone had a deficiency in fasting and he had a deficiency in praying the night Qiyaam (the Taraweeh). Then here is the third shot at it, the Night of Destiny (Laylat al-Qadar), and that by itself is sufficient to attain the forgiveness of Allah.

All three of these Hadith have the same ending, you will be forgiven. You will be forgiven if you fast the days of Ramadhaan, if you pray the nights of Ramadhaan and if you pray the night of Laylat al-Qadar. And in between all that forgiveness, Allah gives multiple folds of reward to get you to the high ranks of Jannah. So if you do not get forgiven by Allah, you sure know how to dodge, but you are dodging forgiveness of the Ghafoor. You are avoiding Rahmah (mercy) and forgiveness pouring at you from every angle. Rahmah and forgiveness you desperately need for blessings in this life, and more importantly for entry to Jannah.

So many chances for forgiveness and attaining the high rank, that the mercy of mankind the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, Rahmatal-lil-'Aalameen (رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ) and

Roohil-Quds (روح القدس) Jibreel made Du'aa on one who misses out on this opportunity. Abu Hurayrah radhiallahu 'anhu said in an authentic Hadith, the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam was ascending the Minbar, and then he said Aameen every step. Aameen, Aameen. They said O Prophet of Allah, why did you say Aameen? He said Jibreel came to me and said may Allah rub his nose in the dust, the person who Ramadhaan comes and does not get forgiven by Allah, so I said Aameen.

The superiority of Ramadhaan comes in knowing what you do in Ramadhaan is extra reward, extra credit. It is knowing that it is time to make up for what you missed out in the past eleven months. What you read of Qur'an, what you do of Salah, what you say of Dhikr is worth more than any other month. Multiple folds of reward, neither I nor anyone can calculate it, that is why the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said in a Hadith Qudsi:

كُلُّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ آدَمَ لَهُ إِلَّا الصِّيَامَ فَإِنَّهُ لِي وَأَنَا أَجْزِي بِهِ

So much reward that Allah calculates it for you, to honour you. It is for Him, He says it is for Me and I shall reward you. The reward continues to elevate in its value until it reaches the summit peak of being worth 83.33 years (a thousand months). One Rak'ah in Laylat al-Qadar ends up being worth as if you did it for thirty thousand nights. One Subhan Allah will end up being worth as if you did it for thirty thousand nights.

That path to seeking the summit of Firdaws is a content path of Ibaadah (worshipping Allah). When you take off on that path (and now is the time to start), you see plains, valleys, hills and mountains, and on the left and side of that path you are going to see bandits and thugs. These thugs, robbers, creeps and thieves on that path and on that journey do not want your money. They do not want your wealth, they do not want your life, they want something more precious than all that. They are after your Deen and your Imaan and your time to attain that. In order to reach safety and salvation, a person on that path and course needs guidance. He needs a map to direct him to the safe routes and the hidden spots where the bandits pop up, when to move faster, when to maintain a pace, and that is what we are going to be talking about in these Khawaatir Inshaa Allah.

Ramadhaan is a virtuous season and a time for diligence. It is our duty to recommend to each other the truth (Haqq) and inspire each other for Ibaadah and righteousness. It is general throughout the year but more so in Ramadhaan, as in Surat al-'Asr:

...وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿العصر: ٣﴾

And recommend one another to the truth and recommend one another to patience. (Surat al-'Asr: 3)

No one is exempted from recommending and no one is above accepting recommendation. In Ramadhaan, many veer off the course of what Ramadhaan was intended for. In some cultures, it has become a time for taking one away from Allah rather than taking him closer to Allah. It has become stripped of what it was intended for. Some spend it in vain, others in Mubaah and others incur sin. It is the few who stay on the path, avoiding the bandits, speeding their path on their way to Allah subhaanahu wa ta'aala.

The Shaytaan has been shackled and he is one cause of the sin, the other cause is your Nafs (the self, the soul). If one is worse in Ramadhaan, he can diagnose his Nafs al-Ammaarah Bis-Soo' (نفس الأمارة بالسوء) as having worse tendencies than the Shaytaan.

...النَّفْسَ لِأَمَّارَةً بِالسُّوءِ... ﴿يوسف: ٥٣﴾

The (human) self is inclined to evil. (Surat Yusuf: 53)

Now is the time to subdue and defeat that Nafs. As the Shaytaan is shackled, you need to shackle your Nafs al-Ammaarah Bis-Soo' (the evil inclination). Just like the Shaytaan was shackled, you have to shackle your Nafs al-Ammaarah Bis-Soo'.

Ramadhaan is a therapy for one's Imaan because as time goes by your Imaan wears out. When you wash your clothes and wear them time and time again, you wear them out. When metal comes into contact with air and moisture over time, there is a process of oxidation and when it occurs rust begins to form on the metal. And that is the Hadith of the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Abdullah Ibn Umar in at-Tabaraani:

إِنَّ الْإِيمَانَ لَيَخْلُقُ فِي جَوْفِ أَحَدِكُمْ كَمَا يَخْلُقُ الثَّوْبُ ، فَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ أَنْ يُجَدِّدَ
الْإِيمَانَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ

Faith wears out of the heart like any one of your clothes wear out, so ask Allah to renew your faith in your hearts. You ask Allah and you act upon it too. Ramadhaan dusts your heart off. It repatches your clothes, it revives your Imaan and it ignites it for a take off. You start off this Imaanic therapy by directing your inclination and fighting your desires, shackling your inclination like the Shaytaan was shackled. If you leave eating and drinking and your wife, which is otherwise Halaal on normal days, this is a boot camp to train you never to do what is Haraam throughout the entire year.

You must understand an important concept in your relationship with Allah. The process starts with you, you have to take the first step forward. In the Hadith al-Qudsi, Allah said I am as my servant thinks of Me, I am with him when he mentions Me. You have to mention Him first. If he mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself. Who starts? He said if you mention. And if he mentions me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly greater than that.

إِذَا تَقَرَّبَ الْعَبْدُ إِلَيَّ شِبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا...

If he comes near to me a hand's length, I come to him an arm's length or a cubit.

وَأِذَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ بَاعًا...

And if he comes to me a cubit's length, I go to him the distance of two outstretched arms.

وَأِذَا أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً...

And if he comes to walking, I come to him at the speed of running.

In every sentence of the Hadith, the relationship starts with you and then Allah responds. It is consistent in the verses of the Qur'an.

... ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ... ﴿غافر: ٦٠﴾

"Invoke Me, [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism)] (and ask Me for anything) I will respond to your (invocation)." (Surat Ghaafir: 60)

You have to invoke Me, then I will answer. You start the invocation, then Allah will give you.

فاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ ... ﴿البقرة: ١٥٢﴾

Remember Me, I will remember you. (Surat al-Baqarah: 152)

You have to start it, so you have to start your relationship with Allah. Ramadhaan is the season to ignite your longing to Allah. Just like when winter approaches, you go and ignite your furnace, you have to ignite your longing and yearning to Allah. Ignite your longing and yearning to Allah so you can do the worship in this month with pleasure, delight and enjoyment. If you do not ignite your longing to Allah, you cannot do your worship in joy. We want you not only to worship Allah, but we want you to do it with enjoyment.

There is a difference between one who fasts and hates it (wrong doers), one who just fasts and the one who fasts and enjoys it.

... فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ...

﴿فاطر: ٣٢﴾

And among them is he who wrongs himself, and among them is he who is moderate, and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds by permission of Allah. (Surat al-Faatir: 32)

There are some who follow the middle course and then there is the third category above all that, the supreme one who fasts and enjoys it. Saabiqun Bil-Khayraat (سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ), the ones who are the foremost in their good deeds. There is one who does Taraweeh and Qiyaam and he cannot wait for the Imaam to do Salaam, one who does it just to do it, and there is another one who does it and he is excited as he is standing before Allah. Some are superficial and traditional in their worship. Others enjoy it when their stomach is rumbling, gurgling and growling, because his mind escapes his body in realising how beautiful this fast is. He realises how much he loves the One he is leaving all these desires for. His stomach is growling but his heart is laughing at how much further and further this is taking him from Jahannam, and how further and further it is

getting him to Firdaws. He stands on his feet the long hours, excited, enthusiastic and eager because his mind is with the reward of where this stand is going to land him. A palace, and the ceiling of it is the 'Arsh of Allah, neighbouring Allah subhaanahu wa ta'aala in Jannah. That is why you need to ignite your longing to Allah in order to enjoy your Ibaadah, and Inshaa Allah we will talk about that in one of the sessions.