

## FASTING AND *TAQWA* (CONSCIOUSNESS OF ALLAH)

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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.  
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.  
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.  
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،  
فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us all increase our devotion towards Allah the Almighty by performing all that He has decreed and abstaining from all that He has prohibited. Hopefully, we will be blessed in this world and in the Hereafter.

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

*Alhamdulillah* (all praise to Allah), we are in the second week of this blessed month of *Ramadan*. One of the main reasons Allah the Almighty made fasting obligatory is to increase *taqwa* (consciousness of Allah). Allah the Almighty says in the Quran in Chapter 2 (*Surah Al-Baqarah*) Verse (*ayat*) 183:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

**Which means:** “You who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may be mindful of Allah.”

Allah sent messengers to uphold the belief in monotheism and the call for piety as in the story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him [PBUH]) recorded in the Quran in Chapter 26 (*Surah Ash-Shu'ara*) Verses (*ayat*) 105 to 110 which means:

*“The people of Noah, too, called the messengers liars. Their brother Noah said to them, ‘Will you not be mindful of Allah? I am a faithful messenger sent to you: be mindful of Allah and obey me. I ask no reward of you, for my only reward is with the Lord of the Worlds: be mindful of Allah and obey me.’”*

### **Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

In general, *taqwa* means persistently obeying Allah’s commands and staying away from His prohibitions. A man once asked Abu Hurairah about the meaning of *taqwa*. So he asked the man, *“Have you ever passed a thorny path? What would you do?”* The man replied, *“If I saw thorns, I would avoid them, pass over them, or stop short of them.”* Abu Hurairah said, *“That is taqwa.”*

*Taqwa* is important as a safeguard for the soul from committing sins, whether openly in public, or even more so when alone. Allah the Almighty says in the Quran in Chapter 8 (*Surah Al-Anfal*) Verse (*ayat*) 29:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

**Which means:** *“Believers, if you remain mindful of Allah, He will give you a criterion [to tell right from wrong] and wipe out your bad deeds, and forgive you: Allah’s favour is great indeed.”*

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

Indeed, fasting is the best form of worship to achieve *taqwa* and build protection from committing sins. In *Sunan Abu Daud*, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

*“Fasting is a shield against the hellfire. Whoever starts the day of fasting, let him not act in an ignorant manner during that day. If anyone treats him in an ignorant manner, let him not insult him or curse him, rather let him say: ‘I am fasting.’”*

From this *hadith*, the highest virtue of a fasting person is not just refraining from doing things that invalidate the fast, but also not doing things that are forbidden such as uttering obscenities or arguing with other people. Among the signs of the moral decline of Muslims is when many do not control their tongues when speaking, such as insulting, mocking, and belittling others. Nowadays this happens openly around us, and on social media.

Some are willing to hide behind false identities simply to spread slander and lies, even while fasting. The saddest thing is, some claim to be of the same religion and nationality, but due to differences in political beliefs, are willing to insult and even lie. In a *hadith* narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ حَاجَةٌ أَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ

**Which means:** “*If one does not abandon falsehood and action in accordance with it, Allah has no need that he should abandon his food and his drink.*”

Muslims should also abstain from useless activities even though they are permissible such as sleeping excessively, wasting time on social media or watching videos on mobile phones. In *Sunan Ibn Majah*, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said which means:

“*There are people who fast and get nothing from their fast except hunger, and there are those who pray and get nothing from their prayer but a sleepless night.*”

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

Concluding this *khutbah* (Friday sermon), let us together strive to gain *taqwa* in the month of *Ramadan*. This can be achieved not just by being hungry and thirsty, but also by training our souls to stay away from *mazmumah* (negative) qualities, whether towards Allah, or among fellow humans. We need to increase *sunnah* practices, stay away from useless activities and avoid hurting other people’s feelings. Let us seek forgiveness from Allah and hope for His abundant rewards as mentioned in the Quran in Chapter 3 (*Surah Ali Imran*) Verse (*ayat*) 133:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

**Which means:** “*Hurry towards your Lord’s forgiveness and a Garden as wide as the heavens and earth prepared for the righteous,*”

بَارَكَ اللهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَانِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.