

## Promises of Allah ﷺ are for the Muttaqoon

I want to begin with a reminder about Sha'aban which we are now in. Usamah ibn Zaidؓ reported: I said, "Ya Rasoolullahﷺ I do not see you fasting any month as much as you fast during Sha'ban." Rasoolullahﷺ said, "It is a month people neglect between Rajab and Ramadan. It is a month in which the deeds are raised to the Rabb of the worlds and I like my deeds to be raised while I am fasting." (Sunan An-Nasa'i). So let us take advantage of the time we have left in this month before we meet Ramadan.

Allahﷻ told us about real success – the success that is never ending. The success after which there is no new exam. The success for which Allahﷻ sent us into this Dunya and made this life a place of test, a place to earn the reward of the Aakhirah.

The first and most critical condition of being a Jannati, of being from among the people of Jannah is to be a Muttaqi – a person of Taqwa. It is good to remind ourselves that all the promises of Allahﷻ's Mercy and Reward are for the Mu'minoon and Muttaqoon. Not for the Muslimoon. Becoming a Muslim is only the entry point; a boundary condition. Without that you are not even in the fold. But to attain levels with Allahﷻ one has to make effort; to enter that blessed group of people who will be honored and entered into Al Jannah. And remember, it is Allahﷻ who will decide who is a Muttaqi. It is not a matter of either one proclaiming it for himself or of his friends or followers proclaiming it for him.

In the Ayah that we hear in every Juma Khutba, Allahﷻ ordered us to have His Taqwa – to fear His displeasure and be aware of His presence– when He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

*A'al Imraan 3:102. O you who believe! Have Taqwa of Allah as it is His right that you should have Taqwa. And do not die except in a state of Islâm (as Muslims)*

Allahﷻ ordered the Muslims to develop a state of mind and heart where they fear to displease Him as it is His right that people should fear to displease Him. And He told the Muslims to make sure that they don't die except in a state of complete submission to Him. This is the meaning of 'fearing Allahﷻ'.

I make this point because we hate things we fear. But with respect to Allahﷻ we love Him. Allahﷻ said about the Believers:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

*Al Baqarah 2:165 But those who believe, love Allâh the most (above all else).*

So the fear of Allah ﷻ is the fear of displeasing Him because we love Allah ﷻ above all else and so we fear displeasing Him more than anything else. Anyone who deliberately disobeys Allah ﷻ is showing that He doesn't love Allah ﷻ. So there is no need for any confusion between fear and love of Allah ﷻ. Then Allah ﷻ showed us how to develop Taqwa and gave us the means to do it. He made fasting Fardh (compulsory) upon us so that we can develop Taqwa.

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

*Al Baqarah 2:83. O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become Al-Muttaqoon*

As we can see, Allah ﷻ ordered us to have Taqwa and then showed us how to develop Taqwa – by fasting. Once a Muslim develops Taqwa then his submission to Allah ﷻ is assured and so the second part of the ayah becomes possible.

وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

*And die not except in a state of Islam (as Muslims)*

The secret of obedience is to obey without question. It is not obedience without understanding. The understanding when obeying any command of Allah ﷻ is to understand who Allah ﷻ is; not necessarily the logic behind the command. To understand any logic a particular level of knowledge is necessary. In the case of the logic behind the commands of Allah ﷻ the slave can never claim to have the knowledge required to understand the logic behind every command. If you consider for a moment you will realize we apply this principle when we deal with experts in any field where we don't have expertise. We believe the expert and follow his advice even when we don't understand exactly why he is saying what he is saying only because we trust two things: his expertise and the fact that he has our best interests at heart.

But with respect to the commands of Allah ﷻ and the teachings of His Messenger ﷺ, we insist on using our understanding as a precursor to obedience. This is a major trap that most of our so-called intellectuals fall into. They get lost in trying to understand the logic of the command and forget who is commanding it. That is why Ramadan comes to emphasize the fact that the Muslim obeys because Allah ﷻ commanded it; and that makes 'sense' to him, even if he doesn't always understand the logic behind the command.

Allah ﷻ made some things Halaal and some things Haraam. But in Ramadan during the hours of daylight, He made even the things which are ordinarily Halaal, Haraam. Allah ﷻ made Halaal whatever is good and beneficial for the slave and Haraam whatever is evil and harmful for the slave. We forget that Allah ﷻ neither benefits nor is harmed by anything and so He has

nothing to gain or lose. It is His Mercy which drives the decision to show us what is harmful and beneficial for us. But in Ramadan Allah ﷻ even makes Haraam what is normally Halaal. When the Muslim obeys Allah ﷻ and fasts he is essentially doing something which makes sense only when one understands whose command it is. It is emphasized for the Muslim that if he obeyed Allah ﷻ during Ramadan and stayed away even from Halaal then how much more important it is for him to stay away from what Allah ﷻ prohibited and made Haraam?

That is why it is so critical to know Allah ﷻ, to be connected to Allah ﷻ, to be conscious of Allah ﷻ and to be concerned about His pleasure and approval for all that we say or do because to Him is our return. Ramadan comes to reiterate this to us every year; that we are the slaves of Allah ﷻ and in being true to that is our salvation. Ramadan comes to teach us obedience. It comes to teach us the meaning of Uboodiya. It comes to teach us the meaning of being Abdullah and Amatullah and to do that because we love Allah ﷻ above all else.

So what is the benefit of being a Muttaqi?

Allah ﷻ began His Book with the promise of Hidayah for the Muttaqeen. He said:

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

*Baqara 2: 2. This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun*

In Suratul Fatiha He ordered us to ask for Hidayah – guidance. Guidance to the path of Righteousness – Siratal Mustaqeem. And here in the next Sura He said that such guidance is only for those who fear to displease Him – the Muttaqoon. Thereby righteousness has been defined as the fear of displeasing Allah ﷻ. That is why the Siratal Mustaqeem is the path of Rasoolullah ﷺ who is the first among the Muttaqoon.

Allah ﷻ told us that eventual success is only for the Muttaqoon. Allah ﷻ said:

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ  
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

*A'araaf 7; 128. Musa (Moses) said to his people: "Seek help in Allah and be patient. Verily, the earth is Allah's. He gives it as a heritage to whom He will of His slaves, and the (blessed) end is for the Muttaqun.*

And Allah ﷻ assured us that success is His to give and that He gives it to those who are just and who fear to displease Him – Al-Muttaqoon

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

**Qasas 28: 83.** *That home of the Hereafter (Jannah), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief by committing crimes. And the good end is for the Muttaqoon*

Allah ﷻ promised to help those who have Taqwa and who strive to do their best for the sake of Allah ﷻ - Al Muhsinoon by honoring them with His presence and said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ

**Nahl 16: 128.** *Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him (keep their duty unto Him) , and those who are Muhsinun.*

What is the value of the Ma'aeyat (company – in a way that suits His Majesty and Grace) of Allah ﷻ? Taqwa is the desire to please Allah ﷻ and Ihsaan is to strive to do it.

The best example of this is to consider the command to pray. Allah ﷻ commanded us to establish Salah. To do that is a sign of Taqwa. We establish Salah to please Allah ﷻ and in obedience to His command to do so. Rasoolullah ﷺ showed us how to do it when he said, 'Pray as you see me pray.' And said about the internal state, 'To pray as if you can see Allah ﷻ and though you can't see Him, know that He sees you.' This level of concentration is the level of Ihsaan. And that is why Allah ﷻ told us to do our best in terms of effort and then to take the help of Salah, because Allah ﷻ told us that he is with those who have Taqwa and work at achieving Ihsaan. He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

**Baqara 2: 153.** *O you who believe! Seek help in Sabr and As-Salat (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with As-Sabirin.*

Sabr is the way to reach the level of Al-Ihsaan, because Sabr means to do the best that you can do. Sabr is not merely patiently sitting and waiting for things to happen. This is illustrated in the life of Rasoolullah ﷺ many times perhaps the best of which is in the Battle of Badr. Rasoolullah ﷺ went to the battle field, did everything that he could possibly do to prepare for the battle and then stood in Salah and made dua. That is why Sabr has been mentioned before Salah (dua) because Islam is a religion of action. We have to do something to get something. That is also why Salah (dua) is mentioned after Sabr, so that we don't start believing that the result was a consequence of our actions. The Salah (dua) puts things in perspective; that we make the effort as this is the law of this world that Allah ﷻ created which He mentioned:

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى

*Najm 53: 39. And that man can have nothing but what he strives for (good or bad)*

But having done that we recognize and accept that results come only by the Grace and Will of Allahﷻ. Allahﷻ said:

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

*Insaan 76: 30. But you cannot will, unless Allah wills. Verily, Allah is Ever All-Knowing, All-Wise.*

So Salah ensures the Tawheed of the heart which we know as Tawakkul. Tawakkul is the Tawheed of the heart – where the slave makes the effort only to please Allahﷻ and to fulfill the conditions of the natural laws that Allahﷻ created but knows that success comes only from Allahﷻ who is not subject to His own laws. That is why after making the effort he doesn't rely on the effort but stands in Salah and asks Allahﷻ for His help. When he does that Allahﷻ promised not only His help but said that He would be with that person. What more can we ask?

It is to teach these lessons that Ramadan comes as a reminder every year. We ask Allahﷻ to open the eyes of our hearts to recognize His bounty and to give us the health, time and Tawfeeq to take full advantage of this great month and all it has to offer.

Finally, Allahﷻ reminded us about that Day which we will all come to and described the scene we will see. He mentioned the two groups; those who have Taqwa and those who don't and told us what their ending will be. I ask Allahﷻ to make us among those who have Taqwa and to decree for us the ending He mentioned here.

قُلْ أَفَعَيَّرَ اللَّهُ تَأْمُرُوْنِي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكَتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

بَلِ اللَّهُ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ

سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَى

فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ

وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَجِيءَ بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

**Zumar 39: 64.** Say (O Muhammad ﷺ to the polytheists): "Do you order me to worship other than Allah O you fools?" **65.** And indeed it has been revealed to you (O Muhammad ﷺ), as it was to those (Allah's Messengers) before you: "If you join others in worship with Allah, (then) surely (all) your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers." **66.** Nay! But worship Allah (Alone) and be among the grateful. **67.** They did not value Allah such as is due to Him. And on the Day of Resurrection the whole of the earth will be grasped by His Hand and the heavens will be rolled up in His Right Hand. Glorified is He, and High is He above all that they associate as partners with Him! **68.** And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will swoon away, except him whom Allah will. Then it will blown a second time and behold, they will be standing, looking on (waiting). **69.** And the earth will shine with the light of its Rabb and the Book will be placed (open) and the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward, and it will be judged between them with truth, and they will not be wronged. **70.** And each person will be paid in full of what he did; and He is Best Aware of what they do.

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاؤُوهَا فَتَحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

**71.** And those who disbelieved will be driven to Jahannam in groups, till, when they reach it, the gates thereof will be opened (like the gates of a prison are opened only when prisoners are standing before them). And its keepers will say, "Did not the Messengers come to you from yourselves, reciting to you the Ayaat of your Rabb, and warning you of the Meeting of this Day of yours?" They will say: "Yes, but the Word of torment has been justified against the disbelievers!" **72.** It will be said (to them): "Enter you the gates of Jahannam, to abide therein. And (indeed) what an evil abode of the arrogant!"

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاؤُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقْنَا وَعَدَّهُ وَأَوْزَنَّا الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوُّهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ  
الْعَامِلِينَ

وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

73. And those who had Taqwa of their Rabb will be led to Jannah in groups, till, when they reach it, and its gates will be opened (before their arrival as a sign of welcome) and its keepers will say: Salamun 'Alaikum! You have done well, so enter here to abide therein." 74. And they will say: "All the praises and thanks be to Allah Who has fulfilled His Promise to us and has made us inherit (this) land. We can dwell in Jannah where we will; how excellent a reward for the (pious good) workers!" 75. And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne (of Allah) from all round, glorifying the praises of their Rabb (Allah). And they (all the creatures) will be judged with truth, and it will be said. All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Rabb of the 'Alamin (all that exists)."