

Points of Reflection Pertaining to Actualising Taqwā during Ramadān

by Shaykh
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise belongs to Allāh, and may prayers and salutations be upon the Messenger of Allāh, upon his family and companions. To proceed:

It is from the well known affairs that from the greatest goals behind fasting is to actualise the act of piety and devotion (*taqwā*) towards Allāh the Exalted. As He the Most Sublime said,

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

“O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you just as it was prescribed upon those before you so that perhaps you may attain piety and devotion (*taqwā*).”¹

And actualising *taqwā* is achieved through fasting because it is a link to *taqwā*, due to what it contains of constraining the self, and overcoming it and giving up lusts and desires.²

And in this brief discussion, I have quick points of reflection about the nature of actualising *taqwā* by the believing slave in Ramaḍān. And before doing that I have an introduction to explain what is intended by *taqwā*.

Introduction: Definition of *taqwā*

Ibn al-Mubārak narrates in his book ‘az-Zuhd’, on the authority of Bakr bin ‘Abd-Allāh, he said, “When the *fitnah* of Ibn al-Ash‘ath transpired, Ṭalq said, ‘Avert it through *taqwā*.’ Bakr said, ‘Summarise *taqwā* for us.’ He said, ‘*taqwā* is acting in obedience to Allāh, upon a light [of guidance] from Allāh, hoping for the mercy of Allāh. And *taqwā* is abandoning disobedience of Allāh, upon a light [of guidance] from Allāh, fearing the punishment of Allāh.’”

This definition from Ṭalq bin Ḥabīb is a comprehensive definition which the people of knowledge have received with acceptance, and they took it as a definition of *taqwā*, and they have recorded it in their writings.

¹ Surah al-Baqarah, verse 183

² See Tafsīr aṭ-Ṭabarī Vol.1 Pg. 214

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) said, “And this is the best that has been said about the definition of *taqwā*.”³

And while commenting on the saying of Ṭalq, adh-Dhahabī said, “He has done excellently and summarised it. Therefore, there is no *taqwā* except with action, and there is no action except by reflecting through knowledge and emulating [the *salaf*]. And that does not benefit except by sincerity to Allāh, not so that it is said: so and so abandoned sins through the light of *fiqh* [knowledge]; as avoiding sins requires its knowledge so the avoidance will occur due to the fear of Allāh, not because he was praised for abandoning it. And the one who adheres to this advice, then verily he is successful.”⁴

So he summarised to us from the definition of *taqwā* from Ṭalq bin Ḥabīb (رحمه الله), that it is to establish obedience and to be distant from disobedience, given all of that is based upon knowledge and foresight, hoping for Allāh's reward, while fearing His punishment.

As for our actualisation of this *taqwā* in our fasting, then it is possible to sum it up in the following:

First Point of Reflection: Fasting Ramaḍān while believing in its obligation, and seeking reward from Allāh:

About this affair the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “Whoever fasts *Ramaḍān* believing [in its obligation], and seeking [reward through it], he is forgiven his past sins.”⁵

The meaning of his (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saying, “believing and seeking”: ‘believing’ means belief in his fasting to be an obligation in truth, and by ‘seeking’ it means seeking reward from Allāh the Exalted.⁶

Therefore, a believer fasts this month because Allāh has made it obligatory upon his slaves in His saying,

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لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

³ ar-Risālah at-Tabūkiyyah Pg. 13

⁴ Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā', ar-Risālah Print, Vol. 4 Pg. 601

⁵ Agreed upon by al-Bukhārī and Muslim

⁶ It was mentioned by Ibn Ḥajar in Fat-ḥ al-Bārī Vol. 4 Pg. 115

“O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed upon you just as it was prescribed upon those before you, that you may attain piety.”⁷

And because it is from the pillars of *Islām*, as is well known in the *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl and other than it. And by fasting the believer hopes for recompense from Allāh and seeks reward for his obedience, patience and performance of this great obligation.

Second Point of Reflection: Avoiding the prohibited things

Avoiding the prohibited matters is not connected to the month of *Ramaḍān* only, rather it is an obligation upon the believer in all months and periods of time. However the affair increases in importance during this noble month due to its nobility and status.

For verily, good deeds are magnified and sin is more severe during it. Shaykh Ibn Bāz (رحمه الله) said, “The month of *Ramaḍān* is the best of the annual months. For verily it is the month of forgiveness, mercy and deliverance from the Fire. So if the month is noble and the place is noble, then the reward is multiplied and the sin of bad deeds is magnified. Therefore, a bad deed in *Ramaḍān* is greater in sin than in other months, just as obedience in *Ramaḍān* is greater in reward with Allāh than obedience in other months. Since *Ramaḍān* is of this lofty status, obedience becomes of greater reward and multiplied manifold during it, and sin of disobedience becomes severer and greater than it’s sin in other months.”⁸

It is reported in the *ḥadīth*, “verily fasting is a protection. And if it is a day when one of you is fasting, then let him not use foul language or raise his voice [in anger]. And if anyone curses him or fights him, then he should say, ‘I am fasting’.”⁹

Ibn Ḥajar said, “And '*al-junnah*' with *dammah* (‘) on the letter *jīm* (ج) is a shield and protection. As for the author of '*al-Nihāyah*', he said, ‘What is meant by it being '*junnah*' is that the fasting person is protected from what harms him from lusts and desires’ and al-Qurṭubī said, '*Junnah* means a protection, meaning in accordance to its performance. Therefore it is compulsory upon the one fasting that he protects it from that which will spoil it and decrease from it’s reward, and

⁷ Surah al-Baqarah, verse 183

⁸ Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā of Ibn Bāz Vol. 15 Pg.446

⁹ Agreed upon by al-Bukhārī and Muslim

this is indicated in his (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saying, “And if it is a day when one of you is fasting, then let him not use foul language...”¹⁰

And reflect about his (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saying, “And if it is a day when one of you is fasting, then let him not make *rafath*...” and *rafath* is foul language and it is generally used for this case, and for sexual intercourse and its precedents, and mentioning it simultaneously with women, or unrestrictedly, or it is possible that it is used for that which is more general than that.¹¹

Third Point of Reflection: Utilising time in various acts of worship for Allāh the Exalted

The diligent believer is receptive to his actions, the well cultured and intelligent, he spends his time in the worship of Allāh and seeking nearness to Him. Especially in this virtuous month. So he revolves between recitation of the *Qur‘ān*, supererogatory prayers, aiding the needy, providing food for breaking the fast of those fasting, and establishing *tarāwīḥ*, *tahajjud* etc. So he has a share and benefit in every form of worship.

And in all that he gives priority to the best over the best, and he is diligent to utilise his time in worship. And no doubt, that from the best forms of seeking nearness and acts of worship is that you draw nearer to Allāh the Exalted through His Speech, and it is the Noble *Qur‘ān*; by recitation and memorisation, and by understanding and studying the *tafsīr*, and by acting upon it and exemplifying it.

Ibn al-Jawzī (رحمه الله) aid, “It is incumbent upon a person to know the virtue of times he lives in, and the value of his time, so he does not waste any moment of it except in the affairs that bring him closer to Allāh, and he gives precedence to the best over the best from speech and action.”¹²

So the believer should contemplate the saying of his Prophet, “A person's feet will not move from their place on the Day of Judgement until he is asked about his life and how he spent it, and his deeds and what he did, and about his wealth and from where he earned it and where he spent it, and his body and how he utilised it.”¹³

¹⁰ Fat-h al-Bārī of Ibn Hajar Vol. 4 Pg.104, adapted

¹¹ Fat-h al-Bārī of Ibn Hajar Vol. 4 Pg.104

¹² Sayd al-Khāṭir Pg. 33

¹³ Reported by al-Tirmidhī Vol. 4 Pg.190 and others and it is Ṣaḥīḥ (authentic)

Fourth Point of Reflection: Preserving his fast

Fasting is not just to fast from eating and drinking, rather the understanding of fasting is broader than that. Therefore fast is kept from everything that harms it or nullifies its reward, or which becomes a reason for his worship being rejected back unto him.

And in a *ḥadīth*, “Whoever does not give up foul speech and acting upon it, then Allāh has no need for him to give up his food and drink.”¹⁴

al-Bayḍāwī (رحمه الله) said, “The goal behind the legislation of fasting is not hunger and thirst in itself, rather what succeeds it from vanquishing the lusts and desires, and subjugating the soul which commands evil into a soul which is content.”¹⁵

And this is from where it becomes obligatory upon the believer to preserve his fast, and to avoid all that which leads to deficiency in acceptance of this worship from him.

‘Alī (رضي الله عنه) said, “Verily, fasting is not just from food and drink, rather it is from lying, falsehood and wastefulness.”¹⁶

And due to that the *salaf* used to strive in preserving their fast. As has been reported, “that Abū Hurayrah and his companions, when they used to fast, they used to remain in the mosque.”¹⁷

Therefore, whoever fasts this month believing in it being an obligation, and seeking reward from his Lord, and distancing himself from the means that nullify his fast or render it deficient, and utilising his time in that which benefits him from the beneficial affairs, and managing himself by scrutiny and diligence, then it is hoped for him through that to actualise *taqwā*, by which Allāh accepts the deeds,

إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

“Verily, Allāh accepts from those who are *muttaqīn* (pious and devout).”¹⁸

¹⁴ Reported by al-Bukhārī

¹⁵ Fat-h al-Bārī by Ibn Hajar Vol. 4 Pg. 117

¹⁶ Muṣannaf of Ibn Abī Shaybah Vol. 2 Pg. 272

¹⁷ Muṣannaf of Ibn Abī Shaybah Vol. 2 Pg. 271

¹⁸ Surah al-Mā'idah, verse 27

*Therefore, O Allāh! Accept the deeds,
and overlook the negligence and errors.*

*And our last call is that verily all praise
belongs to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.*

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23rd Sha‘bān 1438AH²⁰**

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