

This Ramadan, Let's Get Closer to Allah (swt) Together as an Ummah

Alhamdulillah it is a great blessing to witness another Ramadan in our lives, wherein we try our best to get closer to Allah (swt) by fasting, doing extra *ibadaat* (worship) and good deeds. But in order to get closer to Allah (swt), we need to understand what Allah (swt) Himself has informed us to do to gain His closeness. Let us look at a hadith from a hadith Qudsi, which is reported by al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (ra), who said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: Allah (swt) said: «...وما تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وما يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فإذا أُحِبَّهُ، كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا» **...My slave draws nearer to Me with nothing more beloved to Me than that which I have made obligatory upon him and My servant continues to draw near to Me with nawafil so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks**... The hadith continues.

Here, «...وما تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ» **“My slave draws nearer to Me with nothing more beloved to Me than that which I have made obligatory upon him,”** Allah (swt) is saying the obligatory actions, meaning *fard* actions are the most beloved actions to Him. So, in order for us to gain closeness to Him, He (swt) wants us to perform the *fard* actions first and give them priority. And while going closer to Him by performing obligations, it is important that we also avoid what Allah (swt) has made haram. This fulfilling of all obligations while also avoiding haram will make us closer to Allah (swt) and deserving His bounty of Jannah.

In our relationship with Allah (swt), either we continue to draw nearer to Him, or we continue to go away from Him. So, who can “draw near” to Him further according to this hadith? Allah says in this hadith «...وما يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ» **“And My servant continues to draw near to Me with nawaafil so that I shall love him.”** This means, some servants of Allah (swt) who are already closer to Him by performing the obligations and avoiding the haram, they do not stop at this point. They want to go further closer to Him by performing the *nawaafil* (optional / supererogatory) acts regularly. Thus, they deserve more closeness and love of Allah, and much higher grade of Jannah. This is how Allah is telling us to do to get closer to Him (swt) by performing all obligations and then *nawaafil*.

But sometimes, we tend to leave some obligations, and might be involved in haram actions, and try to compensate by doing a lot of *nawaafil* and optional acts, but we know according to this hadith, this is not how we can go closer to Him. Rather, those who leave obligations and perform numerous optional acts still have to face accountability for not performing them, before entering the Jannah. Imagine an employee who is hardworking and does all important work asked by the boss, he will be more loved by him and closer to him compared to the other employee who wants comfort and skips many important ones and rather focuses on optional ones.

But this doesn't mean that we should leave the recommended actions just because we are not fulfilling the obligatory ones; rather, doing recommended actions should push us to fulfil the obligations, thinking if I am doing optional ones, I should be more loving to do obligatory ones in Allah's obedience.

Let's imagine these obligations are like doors, and if we want to go closer to Allah (swt), we have to pass through these doors i.e., the obligations- both personal and collective ones. Alhamdulillah, we perform the personal obligations and pass through these doors like *salah*,

fasting, Zakah, taking care of parents, husband, children, nafaqah, hajj, maintaining ties of kinship, etc. But there is an important collective obligation which we all have to fulfill as an ummah, meaning we all have to open this door of obligation together. This obligation is the crown of all obligations which is *ruling by what Allah (swt) has revealed by re-establishing the Khilafah*. But unfortunately, we stop before this door. We stop at personal obligations while an important and fundamental obligation is left, and if we don't pass through this important door, we cannot go closer to Allah (swt).

This is an obligation unfulfilled today by the ummah, a door unopened and makes us far away from Allah (swt). We, at the back of this closed door, are living in darkness of so many problems from manmade systems, which spread *zulumaat* (darkness) of injustices, poverty, oppression, wars, Islamophobia where Muslims are facing issues when even praying, fast and wear hijab. We are allowing humans to be our Rabb because humans are designing the systems and laws of the society, and they decide halal and haram for us. How can we be closer to Allah (swt) by taking man as sovereign and not Allah (swt)? How can we be closer to Him (swt) by being content with this situation of ours and the Ummah?

We have caused much harm to our relationship with Allah (swt) by having incorrect thinking about our Lord, about Islam. We understood Islam from Western secular perspective; what others want us to think of Islam, not what Allah (swt) wants. Thoughts that Allah (swt) gave only few Ahkam of personal *ibaadat* and morals, ideas that Islam doesn't say anything about poverty, doesn't talk about managing the affairs of the people, are all wrong. In fact, it is a lie against Allah's Deen, and with the ideas that man can design systems better today than Allah (swt), how can we be closer to Him this Ramadan? How will we face Allah (swt) with these incorrect thoughts when He (swt) rather revealed a complete way of life related to social, economic, judicial and foreign affairs, as He (swt) said in Surah Al-Maidah ayah 3, ﴿...الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾ **“...This day I have perfected your Deen and completed my favor upon you and have chosen Islam for you as a deen”** and we have been reciting and memorizing this ayah since childhood?

Let's make our relationship strong with Allah (swt) by knowing Him, and understanding the rulings of Islam through the basis of Qur'an and Sunnah. Let's strive hard together to open this door of collective obligation of re-establishing the Khilafah (Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood. Once we fulfill this obligation and open this door, we as an Ummah of Prophet (saw) will be able to enter into complete Islam by making Allah (swt) as sovereign, will be able to collectively go closer to Allah (swt) as discussed in the hadith Qudsi. Only then we will be called as *Ummate Khair* (people of goodness) and Allah's rulings and systems will bring light and remove the prevailing darkness and problems of the humanity.

﴿يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

“Through which Allah guides those who seek His pleasure to the ways of peace, and brings them out of darkness and into light by His Will, and guides them to the Straight Path.” [Surah Al-Maidah: 16]

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Mahi Mohammad