

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ ،
وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا ،
مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ ،

وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ، يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ . وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَرْسَلَهُ بِدِينِ الْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ، بَيْنَ يَدَيْ السَّاعَةِ ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَا اللَّهِ وَأَحْذَرِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ مِنْ مَعْصِيَتِهِ

تاريخ اليوم الثالثة عشر من شهر رمضان سنة ألف و أربعة مآت و ثلاثون

I council you and myself to have taqwa of Allah, and I council you and myself to avoid and beware of disobeying Him.

The date today is the 13th of Ramadan in the year 1430.

قال الله تعال في كتابه العزي

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ

Whose meaning is:

We will strip away any rancour in their hearts. Rivers will flow under them and they will say, 'Praise be to Allah who has guided us to this! We would not have been guided, had Allah not guided us. The Messengers of our Lord came with the Truth.' (7:42)

These words; taken from an ayat in Surat al-A'raf, are the words of the Companions of the Garden, which they will say when they see what Allah has rewarded them with in Paradise. No doubt you all recognise this ayat, as we recite it every evening during Salat at-Tarawih. By this recitation, we are thanking Allah (swt) for guiding us to Islam, and for guiding us to His worship and for guiding us to the fast of Ramadan. And it is during this blessed month, when the Shayatin are chained up, and the gates of the Garden are open, that we get a taste of Paradise. And it is during this month, while we deprive our selves of their worldly desires, purely for the sake of Allah, that we begin to appreciate the blessings that Allah has given us in this life and so in that way we become like the Companions of the Garden.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ

Praise be to Allah who has guided us to this! We would not have been guided, had Allah not guided us.

The Surah continues:

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا

The Companions of the Garden will call out to the Companions of the Fire, 'We have found that what our Lord promised us is true. Have you found that what your Lord promised you is true?'

And in a later ayat Allah t'ala says:

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ

And between them there will be a dividing wall.

So on the Day of Judgement; that fearful day, when there will be no shade except that of Allah (swt), all of mankind will see that Allah's promise is true. And between the people of the Garden and the people of the Fire there will be a dividing wall.

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

Whose meaning is:

The Companions of the Fire and the Companions of the Garden are not the same. It is the Companions of the Garden who are the victors. (59:20)

The Companions of the Garden and the Companions of the Fire are not the same. Just as in this life the muminun and the kafirun are not the same. And never is this more apparent than during this Blessed Month. While we are fasting and standing in prayer the kuffar go on with their normal lives completely oblivious to the magnificence of this time. So reflect, and do not forget that Allah (swt) has chosen you, each and every one of you and guided you to Islam and placed you in the ummah of His Beloved slave Sayidunnah Muhammad (s.a.w). And may He grant us the victory of the Garden and raise us up among the best of its people.

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said "Every good action of the son of Adam is multiplied by ten to seven hundred times. Allah says: 'Except fasting. It is mine and I repay it Myself. The faster abandons his food and drink for My sake.' The faster has two delights: delight when he breaks his fast and delight when he meets his Lord."

But he (s.a.w) also said in another hadith reported by Abu Hurayrah (r.a.h): Many a one who fasts gets nothing from his fasting but thirst and many a one who prays during the night gets nothing from his night prayers but sleeplessness.

Look at the difference between these two hadith of our Prophet (s.a.w). The first fills us with delight while the second is utterly devastating. In these sayings the Rasul (s.a.w) shows us the two extremes of the fasting experience. While one man is pleasing his Lord and storing up blessings in this life and the Next, the other man gains nothing but thirst and tiredness. Outwardly they are the same, both are fasting, both are standing in prayer. The difference is in the inward. It is in the heart.

In his commentary on the well-known hadith, *أعمال بنيات*

‘Actions are by intentions’, Imam an-Nawawi (rahimahullah) says: The hadith indicates that intention is the measure for rendering actions true, so that where intention is sound action is sound, and where it is corrupt then action is corrupt.

And so the first point is that there must be sincere intention with every action. But it goes further than intention, as the Imam continues:

Wherever there is action accompanied by intention, then there are three states: First, that one does it out of fear of Allah t’ala and this is the worship of slaves. Second, that one does it seeking the Garden and reward, and this is the worship of traders. Third, that one does it out of modesty and shame before Allah t’ala, discharging the right of service and discharging [the duty of] gratitude, seeing oneself along with that falling short, and along with that, one’s heart is fearful because one does not know whether one’s action is accepted or not. This is the worship of free people, and the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w), indicated it when ‘A’ishah, radiya’llahu ‘anha, said to him, when he stood at night until his feet became swollen, “Messenger of Allah, why do you impose this upon yourself whilst Allah has forgiven you your earlier errors and any later ones?” He said (s.a.w), “Shall I not be a grateful slave?”

This third degree, the worship of free people must be our goal and it is the secret to gaining Allah’s pleasure and taking the most from this Blessed Month. In his Ramadan Discourses Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib (rahimahullah) says; “make sure that the aim of your actions is the Face of Allah, not doing things so that you will be given something in return...Your actions must be for the Face of Allah alone.” The key to the matter and the foundation of success is *حب الله* Love of Allah (swt).

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ وَكِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مِنْ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ،
 أُوصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَا اللَّهِ وَطَاعَتِهِ، وَأَحْذَرُكُمْ عَنْ مَعْصِيَتِهِ وَمُخَالَفَتِهِ. فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِيمَا أَمَرَ، وَأَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا نَهَى
 عَنْهُ وَزَجَرَ.

قال تعالى :

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ {7} وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ {8}
 أَمَا بَعْدُ :

Allah t'ala says in Sura Baqara:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

Whose meaning is:

But those who have iman have greater love for Allah. (2:164)

It is reported that A'isha (r.a.h) said: if the first verses revealed from the Quran were "Don't drink wine" by Allah we would have said "We will never stop drinking", and if the first verses were "Do not commit fornication" we would have said "we will never leave it". But the first verses were those of al-Mufassal mentioning the Garden and the Fire until our hearts became attached to our Lord, then the Halal and Haram were revealed."

Do you see? This is the foundation, there is no true action, no true understanding of Halal and Haram, no real taqwa without love of Allah (swt).

It has been said that "The reality of love is being in accordance with what the beloved wants. And so if we truly love Allah, we must know what He wants, and we must know what He loves and we must love what He (swt) loves.

In His Book, Allah t'ala mentions the groups of people that He loves. The first are the muhsinin as He says in Sura Baqara:

وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And do good: Allah loves the good-doers.(2:194)

So Allah begins with the good-doers, the people of ihsan. As we know from the famous hadith of Jibril (alayhi salam) Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and while you do not see Him, know that He sees you. Shaykh Abdal Qadir (may Allah bless and protect him) says, 'the muhsin is the one that knows that Allah sees him. He is not the observer but the observed'.

The next two groups mentioned by Allah appear in the same ayat, again in Sura Baqarah:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

Allah loves those who turn back from wrongdoing and He loves those who purify themselves. (2:220)

But what is tawba? The scholars say that it is a duty to repent of every wrong action. If it is disobedience which occurs between a person and Allah and does not involve the right of another human being, repentance has three preconditions. The first is that one divest himself of disobedience. The second is that he regret doing it. The third is that he resolve to never return to it again. If one of the three is lacking, then his tawba is not sound. If it involves another human being it has an additional fourth precondition that he discharges his duty to the other person.

The fourth group who are promised Allah's love are the muttaqin, as He says in Sura Ali Imran:

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Certainly Allah loves those who have taqwa. (3:75)

Taqwa, while often translated as god-fearing, is literally to protect oneself from Allah's anger by doing what He has ordered and avoiding what He has forbidden.

The next group is the sabirun:

وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ

And Allah loves the steadfast (3:146)

The sixth group goes together with the sabirun, they are the mutawakkilun, as He says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

Certainly Allah loves those who put their trust in Him. (3:159)

The steadfast, are those who hold on patiently, in times of difficulty be it poverty, sickness, hunger or death because they trust in Allah completely, and they are firm in the knowledge that He only wants the best for His slaves (swt).

The seventh group are the just, as He says in Surat al-Maida:

فَأَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

But if you do judge, judge between them justly. Allah loves the just.(5:42)

The final group mentioned by Allah in the Qur'an is very important indeed, He says in Surat as-Saff:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَانَهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَّرْصُورٌ

Certainly Allah loves those who fight in His Way in ranks like well-built walls. (61:4)

This ayat is clear. This deen is built on the ummah. Muslims coming together unified as a community striving for Allah's sake. But in particular, in an age where people are strapping dynamite to themselves and committing suicide in the name of Jihad, Allah clearly defines what Jihad really means. He says fighting in ranks, like well-built walls, this means together side-by-side, taking strength from one another. Our Shaykh says: 'This is fighting in the Way of Allah, and for the cause of Allah - not to defeat a nation, not to recover territory, but in the Way of Allah and the Way of Allah is to establish the Deen.'

Allah t'ala says:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

Whose meaning is:

Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you for your wrong actions. (3:31)

And He (swt) also says:

مَنْ يَطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ

Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah. (4:79)

This leads us to the highest embodiment of Love of Allah, which is love of the Rasul (s.a.w). As we have seen those who truly love Allah, love what Allah loves and want what He wants. So know that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) is the best of creation, the noblest of mankind, the one with the highest position in the eyes of Allah, the highest in rank and the nearest to Him (swt).

As has been narrated from the Messenger (s.a.w) that Allah said, 'Ask, O Muhammad!' I said, 'What shall I ask for, my Lord? You took Ibrahim as a friend; You spoke directly to Musa; You

chose Nuh; and You gave Sulayman a kingdom which no one after him can have.’ Allah said, ‘What I have given you is better than that. I have given you *Kawthar*, and I have placed your name alongside My name which is called out in the heavens. I have made the earth a place of purity for you and for your community. I have forgiven you your past and future wrong actions. You walk among people who are forgiven because of you. I have not done this for anyone before you. I have made the hearts of your community their Qur’ans. I have stored up your intercession for you and I have not stored it up for any prophet but you.’

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

If we only knew the true extent of our own hearts. Allah has guided us to Islam and eased our way to the Garden. We must reflect on the true nature of the gift of Ramadan. It truly is a time like no other. A time when Allah gives us an opening to closeness to him and a taste of the Garden that is not possible at other times. Allah says fasting is His. So take great care not to waste this month, fill the times with dhikr and Qur’an not because you think you should but because you love Allah and you **know** that this is what Allah loves. And may Allah give us success.

So we thank Allah for the gift of Islam and for placing us in the ummah of His beloved (s.a.w)

And we ask Allah to reward him with the best blessings and the highest station in the Garden,

And we ask Allah to gather us the company of the Rasul (s.a.w) in the Akhirah,

And we ask Allah to accept our fast and make it pleasing to him,

To fill our hearts with love of Him,

And to make our actions for His Face alone and nothing else.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا
وَارْضَ اللَّهُمَّ عَنِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ وَعَثْمَانَ وَعَلِيٍّ ، وَسَائِرِ الصَّحَابَةِ خُصُوصًا
الْمُهَاجِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالتَّابِعِينَ لَهُمْ وَتَابِعِي التَّابِعِينَ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِ وِلَاةَ أُمُورِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ لِمَا يُرْضِيكَ وَلَا تَبَاعِ سُنَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ
اللَّهُمَّ أَعِزِّ الْإِسْلَامَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ ، وَاخْذُلِ الْكُفْرَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ ، وَانصُرِ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ،

وَاجْعَلْ كَلِمَتَكَ هِيَ الْعُلْمَا ، وَكَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ هِيَ السُّفْلَى

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ

يَعْظُمُكُمْ لِعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

وَقُومُوا إِلَى صَلَاتِكُمْ يَرْحَمُكُمُ اللَّهُ