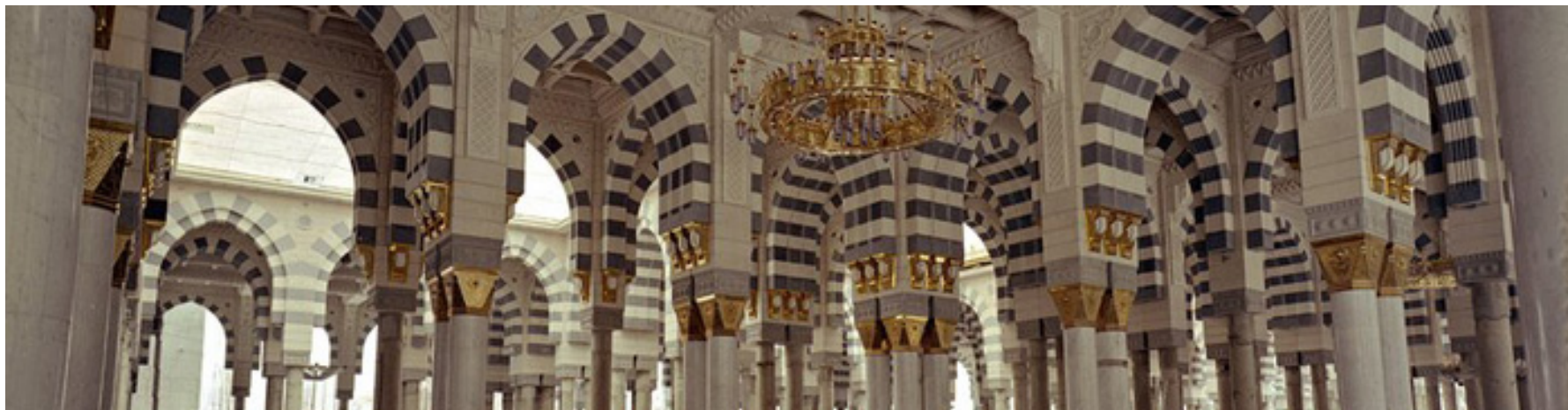


The Friends of Allāh ta'ālā - The Muttaqīn

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Ramadhān is a month of mercy, forgiveness and deliverance from the fire of Jahannam. Salmān al-Fārsī radhiyallāhu 'anhu narrates that once, while addressing the Sahābah radhiyallāhu 'anhum at the end of Sha'bān, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam said:

“...It [i.e. Ramadhān] is a month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness and whose end is freedom from the Fire... (Ibn Khuzaymah)

People around us can be divided into three categories:

1. The muttaqīn servants of Allāh ta'ālā.

Who are the muttaqīn? They are the servants of Allāh ta'ālā who refrain from disobeying Him, and who, if they do ever commit a sin, do not delay in repenting immediately. In this way they remain pure, and their state is such that if they were to depart from this world at any moment, they would go straight to Jannah.

2. Those who mix good deeds with bad deeds.

This is the category in which most of us belong. Sometimes we are overcome with regret - due to sitting in gatherings of the 'ulamā and the mashāyikh or on blessed nights or blessed occasions and places - and we beg Allāh ta'ālā to forgive us. In this way, our sins are washed away but then, some days later, we relapse and go back to the way we were before. Or it may be that we repent from one sin but not from another, e.g. we repent from missing salāh but not from watching films on TV, or vice versa. In other words, we are fifty-fifty when it comes to obeying Allāh ta'ālā.

3. Those who are disobedient to Allāh ta'ālā.

They do not carry out the Commands of Allāh ta'ālā and when they sin, they do not repent. They carry a burden of sin on their shoulders at all times, and their condition is such that if they were to depart from this world, they would go straight to Jahannam. The first category, who keep themselves pure and are not in need of forgiveness, will find that Ramadhān showers them with mercy and bounties right from the very first day. For the second category, it is as if Allāh ta'ālā is saying that although during the last eleven months they have disobeyed Him for half that time, in return for ten days work He will forgive their sins come the eleventh of Ramadhān. The third category, those who have done nothing but wrong, are invited to work for twenty days, and then from the twenty-first day Allāh ta'ālā will deliver them from the fire of Jahannam.

So it is clear that during Ramadhān every category can reap the fruits of mercy, forgiveness and deliverance from the Fire. Through the immense mercy of Allāh ta'ālā, He has made it easy for us to do this. A hadīth describes how Allāh ta'ālā helps His servants during Ramadhān:

“ *When Ramadhān comes the doors of Jannah are opened, the doors of Jahannam are closed and the shayātīn are imprisoned. (Al-Bukhārī)*

This means that the actions that lead to Jannah are made easy and the actions that lead to Jahannam are made very difficult. It can be observed that people who never offer Fajr Salāh outside of Ramadhān feel no burden in doing so in Ramadhān, and people who would normally find even two raka'āt nafl difficult, perform twenty rak'āt tarāwih every night with ease during Ramadhān.

This year we should all make the intention to work hard so that before the crescent of 'Īd is sighted, we are included in the list of the friends of Allāh ta'ālā - the muttaqīn. My beloved Shaykh, Hājī Fārūq rahimahullāh used to say that as Allāh ta'ālā states in the Qur'ān: "O believers, fasting is made obligatory for you, just as it was made obligatory for those before you, that you may become muttaqīn." we should beseech Him to make us of the muttaqīn, as that is what He has created this month for.

We should also hold fast to the following points:

- Abstain from all sins, be they major or minor.
- Do not waste a single second.
- Do as much tilāwah of the Glorious Qur'ān as possible.
- Mix as little as possible with others, for the more we get together with others, the more we talk; and talk eventually ends up becoming sinful, be it in the form of ghībah, slander, accusations, making fun of people etc. Shaykh-ul-Hadīth Mawlāna Muhammad Zakariyyā rahimahullāh used to tell his assistants to announce to those spending Ramadhān with him that they should go to sleep rather than engage in talking with each other.

- Ask Allāh ta'ālā to grant you His mercy, His love and His friendship.
- Contemplate over the past and make resolutions for the future.
- In a hadīth, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam has directed us towards four things we should do in abundance during the blessed month: recitation of the Kalimah Ṭayyibah, asking for forgiveness, asking for Jannah and seeking refuge from Jahannam. My late father rahimahullah taught me a special formula of du'ā to recite abundantly in Ramadhān when I was a child back in India. He taught me the words:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ، أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ

lā ilāha illallāh, astaghfirullāh, as'alukal-jannah wa a'ūdhu bika minan nār.

It was only when I had grown up that I learned this hadīth, and realised that by teaching me that simple formula, my beloved father rahimahullāh was helping me to practice on it.

- During the last precious portion of the night, perform tahajjud and then sit in the darkness of your room, alone, and turn to Allāh ta'ālā, asking for all your needs of this world and the hereafter.
- Ten to fifteen minutes before breaking the fast, forget everything and just turn to Allāh ta'ālā and ask Him to fulfil all your needs.

May Allāh ta'ālā make this Ramadhān a turning point for us all, and may He enlist us in the honoured group of those who are His special friends. Āmīn.

I humbly request all readers to also make du'ā for me, my parents, teachers, mashāyikh, family and associates during the blessed month.

Courtesy: Riyādul Jannah