

## Striving Against the Self in Ramadan

### First Khutbah

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ , نَحْمَدُهُ , وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ , وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا , مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ , وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ , وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

Verily, all praise is for Allah. We praise Him, we seek His assistance and we ask for His forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Him from the evils of our selves. Whoever Allah guides, none can misguide. Whoever He misguides, none can guide. And I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah and I bear witness that Mohammad is His servant and messenger.

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ [آل

عمران:102]

Al Imran(3) 102 : **O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam.**

Oh Believers:

Allah Almighty made this worldly life the place of tests and trials, and patience and perseverance. So whoever overcomes the trails, and is patient for the sake of Allah Almighty, and strives in His way, it is a right upon Allah Almighty to be pleased with them, and to admit them into Paradise.

And the person from the time that they start being accountable to when they are no longer accountable, engages in a conflict with their inner self and their devil. For their inner self invites to following their vain desires. And one's devil leads them to what destroys them. And people are of two

types. The first type are those who are overcome by their devils, and incline to the worldly life and follow their lusts and forget the rights of their Lord, So their destiny is as Allah Almighty describes:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى \* وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا \* فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى-التَّازِعَات

An-Naazi'aat (79) 37-39: **(37) So as for he who transgressed (38) And preferred the life of the world, (39) Then indeed, Hellfire will be [his] refuge.**

And the opposite is for the one who overcomes their devil, subdues their inner self, and does not incline to the worldly life, and enjoys what Allah Almighty has permitted for fulfilling their desires and does not go beyond that to what Allah has forbidden, and establishes the right of Allah Almighty in the best fashion. This type of person is mentioned in Allah's words:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى \* فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى-التَّازِعَات

An-Naazi'aat (79) 40-41: **(40) But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination, (41) Then indeed, Paradise will be [his] refuge.**

Whoever loves Allah Almighty and magnifies His Symbols, and confines their inner selves to what Allah Almighty loves, will limit their inner selves to what Allah has permitted. And whoever lets their inner selves loose and lets them follow their desires, will be deficient in loving Allah Almighty to the extent that they follow their desires and disobey their Lord.

Abu Omar bin Bujeed, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "whoever values his religion, looks down upon his inner self."

And Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "love of Allah Almighty necessarily mandates striving in His way. For whoever loves Allah

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and is loved by Allah, loves what Allah loves and hates what Allah hates, supports those whom Allah supports, and forsakes those whom Allah forsakes. There will never be love without that according to its strength and weakness. For love mandates getting closer to the beloved and distancing from what he dislikes. And when love is coupled with renunciation of what the beloved hates, then love is complete.

Indeed remedying the inner self and striving against it is from the greatest types of striving. Because it is a struggle throughout the entire lifetime. And if one lives longer, their inner self weakens and requires even more effort. Sufyan Athawree said, "I have not remedied anything more difficult than my inner self, sometimes I prevail and sometimes I fail".

And Omar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to address his inner self, and used to subdue it so that it does not prevail and drive him away from diligence. He, may Allah be pleased with him, entered in front of a wall and began addressing his inner self and taking it to account. Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, heard him say, "Omar bin Khattab, the Leader of the Believers, wow, wow, by Allah oh son of Al Khattab you shall be conscious of Allah or He will torment you."

A person may exert efforts for improving others but may forget about his inner self that requires effort to contain. So they leaves to it to mount their whims and obtain what it wants. And they do not think that they need to strive against their inner selves. Rather, one may deny that and see that their inner self is in the best state or that, at least, they are not the worst of people. And this paralyzes one from striving and they journey through ruin.

The first step in striving against one's inner self is to admit that it requires striving and to look at its deficiencies, faults and mistakes, and compare it with those who are better.

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And as the inner self is weak and the devil is always there, one must continually strive against their inner self. Especially since the devil does not stop or get bored of whispering to people's hearts. And the remedy for that is always striving.

Avoiding sins requires striving against the devil and requires resistance against the inner self that commands to evil. And performing the obligations and recommended deeds requires striving against one's inner self whose nature is to incline to rest and laziness and striving is required against the devil who dampens determination and weakens resolve and adorns leaving attaining good deeds. And it is the way of the Prophets and companions and those who follow them to continually strive for the sake of Allah, and oblige their inner selves to attain good deeds and to leave misdeeds.

And whoever is sincere with Allah Almighty, and strives in this matter, Allah grants them guidance, and weakens the devil's power over them. Allah Almighty said:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ-العنكبوت 69

Al Ankabut (29) 69: **And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allāh is with the doers of good.**

For the guidance is from Allah Almighty. And the ones deserving it are the doers of good. Those who strive for Allah until He grants them what they seek of guidance.

And the reality of those striving indicates this. Consider Allah's Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. Satan called him to commit indecent acts with the wife of Al-'Azîz, whose inner self instructed her to evil. So her attempt to seduce Yusuf was adorned for her. But Yusuf, peace be upon him,

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strived against his inner self, and he did not submit to the satan and to his base desires. So he said:

مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ - يوسف 23

Yusuf (12) 23: [I seek] the refuge of Allāh. Indeed, he is my master, who has made good my residence. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed.

And he acknowledged his lack of ability and weakness despite of his striving, and asked Allah Almighty for protection from this affliction and supplicated:

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

Yusuf (12) 33: He said, "My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me. And if You do not avert from me their plan, I might incline toward them and [thus] be of the ignorant."

Then Allah answered his supplication:

\*فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

Yusuf (12) 34: So his Lord responded to him and averted from him their plan. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing.

And this response from Allah Almighty to Yusuf, peace be upon, was after Yusuf strived and was genuine in turning to Allah Almighty.

And when a man asked the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم to accompany him in paradise he صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said to him:

فَاعِنِّي عَلَى نَفْسِكَ بِكَثْرَةِ السُّجُودِ

Then assist me against your inner self by prostrating a great deal. [Muslim 489]

And this requires striving. If a person realizes striving, they will attain that which for they wish and Allah will give them what they asked for. As attaining what one wants, requires effort and striving, and it is not obtained by wishing only. So if effort is combined with turning to Allah Almighty, a person attains what they want.

Ubayy bin Ka'b (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

كَانَ رَجُلٌ لَا أَعْلَمُ رَجُلًا أَبْعَدَ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ مِنْهُ وَكَانَ لَا تُحْطِئُهُ صَلَاةٌ - قَالَ - فَقِيلَ لَهُ أَوْ قُلْتَ لَهُ لَوْ اشْتَرَيْتَ حِمَارًا تَرَكْبُهُ فِي الظُّلْمَاءِ وَفِي الرَّمْضَاءِ . قَالَ مَا يَسُرُّنِي أَنْ مَنَزِلِي إِلَى جَنْبِ الْمَسْجِدِ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُكْتَبَ لِي مَمَشَايَ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ وَرُجُوعِي إِذَا رَجَعْتُ إِلَى أَهْلِي . فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " قَدْ جَمَعَ اللَّهُ لَكَ ذَلِكَ كُلَّهُ " .

There was a man, and I do not know of any other man whose house was farther than his from the mosque, and he never missed prayer (in congregation). It was said to him: "If you buy a donkey you could ride it in the dark nights and in the burning sand." He said: "I do not like my house to be next to the mosque, for I (eagerly) desire that my steps towards the mosque and when I return to my family be recorded (as good deeds)."

Upon this Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Allah has granted you all of those rewards". [Muslim 663a]

Allah Almighty said:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكَ  
مُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا

اشْهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ

مَ النَّصِيرُ-الحج 78

Al Hajj (22) 78: And strive for Allāh with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. He [i.e., Allāh] named you "Muslims" before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So establish prayer and give zakāh and hold fast to Allāh. He is your protector; and excellent is the protector, and excellent is the helper.

أَقُولُ مَا تَسْمَعُونَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

I say what you have heard and I seek forgiveness from Allah for me and you from every sin. So seek forgiveness from Him, Verily He is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

## Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

All praise is to Allah, and peace and blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, and I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah and I bear witness that Mohammad is His slave and messenger.

Oh people:

Striving is more apparent in fasting than in any other acts of worship. For a person in Ramadan strives against their inner self and curbs their desires. Seeking the pleasure of Allah Almighty, a person does not eat food although they crave it, they do not drink water despite of its

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availability and their thirst. And a person strives against their inner self and abstains from all that which breaks the fast seeking the pleasure of Allah Almighty.

For fasting trains a person to strive. And whoever is able to refrain from that which breaks the fast the whole day is able to refrain from the forbidden the entire night. And whoever fasts from the forbidden all of Ramadan has proven that they can fast from the forbidden outside of Ramadan. And this is striving.

Oh fasting people, we were able to curb our desires, whether permissible or forbidden, during the day of Ramadan, why can't we curb our inner selves from the forbidden during the nights of Ramadan? And why don't we do so outside of Ramadan?

Our striving against our inner selves and devils in the day of Ramadan indicates our ability to strive and our attention to suppressing our inner selves. So why do we not continue in that striving until we attain guidance and attain the level of ihsan (excellence), the price of which is sincere striving?!

So be conscious of your Lord Allah and strive against your inner selves. And strive against satan and his troops in this great month. And safeguard yourselves and your homes from what Allah has prohibited.

We ask Allah Almighty to make us among those who strive in the various ways of seeking His pleasure and among those who strive to protect their hearts, thoughts, eyes, ears, tongues and all their limbs from the forbidden. Indeed Allah is All Hearing, Answering.

هَذَا وَصَلُّوا وَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى نَبِيِّكُمْ كَمَا أَمَرَكُمْ بِذَلِكَ رَبُّكُمْ , فَقَالَ

I conclude with this and send prayers of blessings and peace upon your Prophet as your Lord commanded:



إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Al Ahzaab (33) 56: Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace.

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنَا فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ وَعَافِنَا فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ وَتَوَلَّنَا فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِيمَا  
أَعْطَيْتَ وَقِنَا شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ إِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ وَإِنَّهُ لَا يَذُلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ  
تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ

O Allah, guide us with those whom You have guided, grant us well-being among those You have granted well-being, be an ally to us along with those whom You are an ally to, and bless what You have bestowed upon us, and save us from the evil of what You have decreed. For verily You decree and none can decree over You. He whom You support can never be humiliated. Glory is to You, our Lord, You are Blessed and Exalted.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ نَعْلَمْ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ  
مِنَ الشَّرِّ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ نَعْلَمْ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا  
سَأَلَكَ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَادَ بِهِ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ  
الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ  
عَمَلٍ وَنَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ كُلَّ قَضَاءٍ قَضَيْتَهُ لَنَا خَيْرًا

O Allah, We ask You for all that is good, in this world and in the Hereafter, what we know and what we do not know. O Allah, we seek refuge with You

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from all evil, in this world and in the Hereafter, what we know and what we do not know. O Allah, we ask You for the good that Your servant and Prophet has asked You for, and we seek refuge with You from the evil from which Your servant and Prophet sought refuge. O Allah, we ask You for Paradise and for that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed, and we seek refuge in You from Hell and from that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed. And we ask You to make every decree that You decree concerning us good.

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ  
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ، يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Servants of Allah. Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.

أذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ يَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ يَزِدْكُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا لَهُ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاتَّقُواهُ يَجْعَلْ  
لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَخْرَجًا ، وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ

Remember Allah, the Great - He will remember you. Thank Him for His favors - He will increase you therein. And seek forgiveness from Him - He will forgive you. And be conscious of Him - He will provide you a way out of difficult matters. And, establish the prayer.