

Allahﷻ sent Ramadan to give us an opportunity to connect ourselves with Him. When the slave gets close to His Rabb, it is only natural that he asks about Him. See the Mercy of Allahﷻ. He said, in the Ayaat related to fasting:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

Baqara 2:186. And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near. I respond to the dua of the supplicant when he calls on Me. So, let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be rightly guided.

What does the slave do when he has been fasting for the pleasure of Allahﷻ and his Taqwa has increased, and he feels close to Allahﷻ? He makes dua. Allahﷻ says that when his slave asks about Him, He is near His slave. The very action of asking about Allahﷻ is a means of drawing close to Allahﷻ. Allahﷻ then says that he listens to the dua of his slave and grants it provided His slave is obedient and has faith. Allahﷻ said:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي
سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

Ghafir 40: 60. And your Rabb said: "Ask Me, (make dua to Me) I will respond to your (dua). Verily! Those who scorn My worship [are not Muslim and don't make dua] they will surely enter Jahannam in humiliation!"

An-Nu'man bin Bashir (RA2) reported: Rasoolullahﷺ said, "Dua is worship." [Abu Dawud].

In this month of Ramadan let us make the most of dua. Ask Allahﷻ for whatever you need with complete certainty that He will grant your dua. Talk to Allahﷻ. He listens and knows what is in our hearts and can change our situation. So, ask Him and not anyone else.

Someone asked Rasoolullahﷺ - We make dua and in some cases Allahﷻ gives us what we ask for. In other cases, we find that we don't get what we asked for. What is the meaning of this?

Zayd ibn Aslam (RA2) narrated that Rasoolullahﷺ said, 'Nobody makes a dua without one of three things happening. Either it is answered, or it is stored up for him, or wrong actions are atoned for by it.' [Muwatta Malik]

Sometimes Allahﷻ, who knows what is best for us, gives us what we ask for. Sometimes he withholds it for our own benefit. When we reflect on our lives, we will see what a wonderful thing it was that Allahﷻ withheld and didn't grant our dua but instead He chose for us what He wished.

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ يُنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ

Shurah 42:27 And if Allah were to enlarge the provision for His slaves, they would surely rebel in the earth, but He sends down by measure as He wills. Verily! He is in respect of His slaves, the Well-Aware, the All-Seer (of that benefit them).

That is not all. Allahﷻ doesn't reject the dua, He merely delays its acceptance in our interest because He knows the reality of what will happen if it is granted. Instead in His infinite mercy he forgives sins and averts calamities in exchange for unanswered duas. See the mercy of Allahﷻ. Why does He need to do this except to show us how merciful He truly is? How wretched then is the one who is still ungrateful?

Rasoolullahﷺ explained that finally Allahﷻ keeps those duas which are not answered, with Him and on the Day of Judgment, Allahﷻ will give the slave whatever he asks at that time.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (RA) reported: Rasoolullahﷺ said, "There is no Muslim who makes dua to Allahﷻ without sin or cutting family ties in it but that Allahﷻ will give him one of three answers: he will give him what he asked or he will store it for him in the Hereafter, or he will divert an evil from him similar to it." They said, "In that case we will ask for more." Rasoolullahﷺ said, "Allahﷻ has even more." [Sahih – Musnad Ahmad]

One of the Salaf said, "When my dua is accepted, I am happy. But when I don't get what I asked for, but get something else, I am ten times as happy." They asked him why? He replied, "When my dua is accepted, I got what I **wanted**. But when I didn't get it but something else, then I got what my Rabb wanted **to gift me**. So, I am ten times as happy to get it."

My brothers and sisters, it is essential to reflect on our lives and be grateful to Allahﷻ for having given us this access to Himself without any reservations

and protocol, without any intermediaries and connectors. When the slave places his head in Sajda before his Rabb – there are only two in that equation – the Rabb and His Abd. That is what the Anbiya came to teach us. That is what Rasoolullahﷺ taught us.

Create your own style of asking Allahﷻ. He didn't put any conditions on making dua. We can ask Allahﷻ in any language, in any state, in any condition, anywhere and anyhow. It makes perfect sense not to have any conditions about making dua because the slave asks when he is in dire need. And so, he/she must be free to ask in any way and from anywhere. Language is one of the most powerful signs of Allahﷻ. All languages are from Allahﷻ and we can ask Allahﷻ in any language. Remember however that Allahﷻ said, "So, let him obey me and have faith in me." All promises in the Qur'an are conditional. We need to fulfill our side of the deal.

Sayyiduna Anas bin Malik reports that Rasoolullahﷺ once passed by a Bedouin who was making the following dua in his Salah:

"يا مَنْ لا تَرَاهُ العِيونُ، ولا تُخالِطُهُ الظُّنُونُ، ولا يَصِفُهُ الوَاصِفُونَ،
ولا تُغَيِّرُهُ الحَواذِثُ، ولا يَخْشَى الدَّوائِرُ، وَيَعْلَمُ مَثاقِيلَ الجِبالِ،
وَمَكايِيلَ البِحارِ، وِعدَدَ قَطْرِ الأمطارِ، وِعدَدَ وَرِقِ الأشجارِ،
وِعدَدَ ما أَظْلَمَ عَلِيه اللَّيْلُ، وَأَشْرَقَ عَلِيه النَّهارُ، ولا تُوارِي مِنْهُ

سَمَاءُ سَمَاءٍ، وَلَا أَرْضُ أَرْضاً، وَلَا بَحْرٌ مَا فِي قَعْرِهِ، وَلَا جَبَلٌ مَا فِي
وَعْرِهِ، اجْعَلْ خَيْرَ عُمْرِي آخِرَهُ، وَخَيْرَ عَمَلِي خَوَاتِمَهُ، وَخَيْرَ أَيَّامِي
يَوْمَ أَلْقَاكَ فِيهِ "

"O The One Whom eyes cannot see, Who cannot be imagined, Who is beyond description, Who is unaffected by happenings, Who cannot be overwhelmed by the twists and turns of time, Who knows the weight of the mountains, the volume of the oceans, the number of falling raindrops, the number of leaves on the trees and everything upon which the night darkens and upon which the day brightens. No sky can hide another from Him, no surface of the earth can hide another from Him, no ocean can hide anything within its depths from Him and no mountain can conceal from Him anything within its rocks. Make the last part of my life the best, make the best of my deeds the last and make my best day be the one in which I meet You."

Rasoolullah ﷺ appointed someone to bring the Bedouin to him as soon as he completed his Salah. Rasoolullah ﷺ had been given some gold from a certain mine and when the Bedouin came before him after he had completed his Salah, Rasoolullah ﷺ gave him the gold and asked, "Which tribe do you belong to?"

The man said that he was from the Banu Aamir bin Sa'sa'ah. Rasoolullah ﷺ then asked, "Do you know why I gave you this gold as a gift?" "Because of the family ties between us, Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ, he said. Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "While family ties have a

right, I actually gave you the gold because of the beautiful manner in which you praised Allah ﷻ." (Tabraani and confirmed by Haythami Vol. 10 pg. 158).

The first dua ever made was perhaps that of Adam (AS) and Hawwa (AS) when they asked Allahﷻ for forgiveness. Seeking forgiveness is the beginning of all goodness. Allahﷻ said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ
عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا
يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ
يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا نُورَنَا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Tahreem 66: 8. O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance! It may be that your Rabb will forgive your sins and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow (Jannah) the Day that Allah will not disgrace the Prophet (Muhammad ﷺ) and those who believe with him, their Light will run forward before them and with (their Records Books of deeds) in their right hands they will say: "Our Rabb! Keep perfect our Light for us [and do not put it off till we cross over the Sirat safely] and grant us forgiveness. Verily, You are Able to do all things."

All change begins with accepting that we need to change. And that begins with repentance to Allahﷻ for having transgressed Hisﷻ boundaries. As someone said, "If you keep reminding your heart of Allahﷻ, there will come a time when your heart will remind you of Allahﷻ." I remind myself that this

is a sign that you are protected by Allahﷻ. Because to be reminded of Allahﷻ is to be free from His disobedience.

Mansoor ibn Amaar (RA) says: One night I went out and I thought morning had arrived, although night was still remaining. I sat near a small door. I heard a young man crying who was saying: *“By Your Honor and Jalal! I did not intend to oppose You by disobeying You. When I disobeyed, I did not disobey because I do not know Your punishment nor that I will be punished by You, nor did I underestimate Your Sight but my nafs [self] deceived me. My misfortune overtook me and Your curtain that conceals my sins deluded me. And now who can protect me from Your punishment? Whose rope should I hold, if Your rope is cut for me? O grief! On those days that were spent in the disobedience of my Rabb. O regret! How many times should I repent? How many times should I turn back? Now the time has arrived that I have shyness from my Rabb.”*

One shares their secrets with the one he loves. If we love Allahﷻ as it is the trait of the believers, then we should speak with Him in secret. Confess your sins before Him and seek repentance sincerely in your own words. Shed sincere tears and keep your heart attentive to the words and customize your duas according to your pain. The best thing about Islam is that you do not have to go to a priest to confess your sins. Share them with Allahﷻ privately and preserve your honor. Do not disclose your sins to anyone. Not even your spouse or parents.

On the Day of Judgment some will say:

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَالِّينَ

Mu'minoon 23: 106 *“Our Rabb, our wretchedness overcame us, and we were a people astray.”*

Let us not become those who will confess on the Day of Judgment that indeed they had been astray. We need to learn our Deen “right now” and make the most of our health and free our time to learn what pleases Allahﷻ and what calls for His anger. May Allahﷻ guide and protect us.

Allahﷻ’s forgiveness is boundless. We only need to ask.

Abu Dharr Gifari (R) reported: Rasoolullahﷺ said, “Allahﷻ says: Whoever comes with a good deed will have the reward of ten like it and even more. Whoever comes with an evil deed will be recompensed for one evil deed like it or he will be forgiven. Whoever draws close to Me by the length of a hand, I will draw close to him by the length of an arm. Whoever draws close to Me the by length of an arm, I will draw close to him by the length of a fathom. Whoever comes to Me walking, I will come to him running. Whoever meets Me with enough sins to fill the earth, not associating any partners with Me, I will meet him with as much forgiveness.” (Sahih - Sahih Muslim 2687)

Abu Huraira (R) reported: Rasoolullahﷺ used to say in his Sujood, “O Allah, forgive all of my sins, the small and large, the first and last, the public and private.” Sahih - Sahih Muslim 483

I remind myself and you that all goodness comes from making thoughtful choices. Ramadan comes to enable us to do that. To recognize the Glory and Magnificence of Allahﷻ, to seek comfort and courage in His Mercy and Forgiveness and to remember that one day we will meet Him and answer to Him. On that Day nothing can help anyone except their deeds. Ramadan comes to enable us to repent, rethink, reset and reboot our lives to make them obedient to Allahﷻ, which means to live according to the Sunnah (Way) of Rasoolullahﷺ. Study his life and live like he did and die as he did. That is what Ramadan comes for. Let us remember that and use Ramadan to start a new positive, powerful, meaningful, and fulfilling phase of our lives. I ask Allahﷻ for His help and Mercy.

Let me end by reminding myself and you that this is the man who Allahﷻ sent for our guidance, who suffered all sorts of privations and difficulties to fulfill his duty to His Rabb and out of his love for us, his Ummah. People he knew and those like us, yet unborn. We believe in him without seeing him and he made dua for us without seeing us.

Rasoolullahﷺ said: 'I wish I could meet my brothers. The Sahaba said: Are we not your brothers? Heﷺ said: You are my companions, but my brothers are those who have faith in me although they never saw me' [Musnad Ahmad].

Abu Hurayrah (R) reported that Rasoolullahﷺ came to the graveyard and said: Peace be upon you! The abode of the believing people and we, if Allahﷻ so wills, are about to join you. I love to see my brothers. They asked: Aren't we your brothers,

Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ? He said: You are my companions, and our brothers are those who have, so far, not come into the world. They said: Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ how would you recognize those people of your Ummah who have not yet been born? He said: Supposing a man had horses with white blazes on foreheads and legs among horses which were all black, tell me, would he not recognize his own horses? They said: Certainly, Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ. He said: They would come with white faces and arms and legs owing to Wudhu, and I would arrive at Al Kauthar before them. Some people would be driven away from my cistern (Al Kauthar) as the stray camel is driven away. I would call out: Come, come. Then it would be said (to me): These people changed themselves after you, and I would say: Be off, be off.

This is the man whose Sunnah Allahﷻ made the most beautiful thing for us to follow and which converts our ordinary actions into acts of worship. He is the one who will be granted intercession by Allahﷻ on the Day of Judgment, and we hope that he will intercede for us. Let us pick carefully who we love because they are the ones who we will be with when we meet Allahﷻ on the Day of Judgment. I ask Allahﷻ for His Mercy for us all.