

Returning to Allāh in Rajab

The following is a summary of a Khuṭbah delivered by Sayyidī al-Ḥabīb `Umar bin Ḥafīz (may Allāh preserve him and benefit us by him) in Masjid al-Rawḍah, Tarīm, on 27th Jumāda al-Ākhirah 1433 / 18th May 2012. There are some additions for extra clarity.

O believer, look to see how you end the month of Jumāda al-Ākhirah, and look to see how you receive the month of Rajab, the month which stands alone among the sacred months. This month was venerated even in the times of Jāhiliyyah, and Islām came to reinforce this veneration. O believer in Allāh, one of your most important aims in this life is for your heart to be completely focused on Allāh and at the same time to be someone that unites people's hearts.

One of the greatest manifestations of your focusing your heart on Allāh is being aware of your shortcomings towards Him, seeking refuge in Him, seeking forgiveness from Him, repenting to Him and pleading that out of His kindness He overlooks your faults.

Seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) from Allāh is foundational in focusing your heart on Allāh. When seeking forgiveness:

1. you express awareness of your errors and shortcomings towards Him;
2. you express your certainty that you have a Lord Who takes people to account for their sins, Who may forgive them or may punish them; you express your certainty that the affair is in His hands;
3. you express your need for your Lord which leads you to plead with Him to be forgiven.

The Prophet, the one who was protected from falling into sin; the most pure, would seek forgiveness from Allāh one hundred times in one sitting. He would say:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَتُبْ عَلَيَّ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

My Lord, forgive me and turn to me, truly You are the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful.¹

This tells us how the life of the Prophet was, how his gatherings with his Companions were, so seek to resemble them. Beware of gatherings in which Allāh is not mentioned, in which His forgiveness is not sought and in which the return to Him is not mentioned. O believer, beautify your gatherings in the same way that your guide, the Chosen One, Muḥammad beautified his gatherings. He is the one who said: "Good tidings to the one who finds in his book (in which his actions are recorded) much

¹ Narrated by Abu Dāūd and al-Tirmidhī

istighfār (seeking forgiveness).”¹ Seeking forgiveness is a remedy for your sins, and sins are the cause of tribulations in this life and the next. The fire of your sins is only extinguished by seeking the forgiveness of the Living, the Eternal, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

Throughout your life you have the opportunity to seek forgiveness from Allāh, but there are specific times when you should do so during the day and night and during the months of the year. The last portion of the night is one of these times. Allāh says, describing the people of *taqwā*: **Those who show patience, those who are truthful, those who worship devoutly, those who spend (their wealth for Allah’s sake) and those who seek forgiveness in the last portion of the night.**² Allah also says: **They were prior to that people of righteousness; they were in the habit of sleeping little by night; and they would seek forgiveness in the last portion of the night.**³

Another time to seek forgiveness is after performing the prescribed prayer. In doing so, you remember the deficiencies in your prayer and to ask for acceptance.

Even when leaving the toilet your Prophet taught you to say three times:

عُفْرَانِكَ

I seek Your forgiveness.

If you say this when you go to bed three times your sins will be forgiven even if they are as numerous as the foam on top of the sea:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

I seek the forgiveness of Allāh, the Most Great, besides Who there is no god; the Living, the Sustainer, and I repent to Him.

Among the months, Rajab is the month of seeking forgiveness. Al-Daylamī narrates on the authority of `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh ennoble him) that the Messenger of Allāh (may Allāh bless him and grant him peace) said: “Seek much forgiveness (from Allāh) in Rajab because in every hour (of the month) Allāh frees people from the Fire.” When the month entered the Prophet would say, as Anas narrates:

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي رَجَبٍ وَ شَعْبَانَ وَ بَلِّغْنَا رَمَضَانَ

“O Allah, bless us in Rajab and Sha`bān and enable us to reach Ramadān!”⁴

It is a blessed month, may Allah bless us and the Ummah in it. In the times of Jāhiliyyah the noise of battle would not be heard in this month. This was due to the veneration that people had for the

¹ Narrated by Ibn Mājah and al-Bayhaqī

² *Āl `Imrān*, 3:17

³ *Al-Dhāriyāt*, 51:16

⁴ Narrated by Aḥmad

month, even though they were polytheists. Allāh revealed concerning this month: ***They ask you about the sacred month – fighting therein. Say: fighting therein is a grave offence.***¹

Look at the state the Ummah has reached today. Some Muslims have actually declared war in the month of Rajab, not on the disbelievers, but on each other. Some have travelled around spilling the blood of their brothers. Look how far the Ummah has sunk when it has left the guidance of Allāh and His Messenger and surrendered its reins to corrupt people, to disbelievers, to people deceived by their own philosophies!

Our Master said: “O people, repent to Allāh for truly I repent to Allāh in every day and night seventy (or one hundred) times.”² Allāh says in the ḥadīth qudsī: “O son of Ādam, if your sins were so numerous that they reached the heavens and then you sought My forgiveness I would forgive you and it is nothing to Me.”³ If someone allows Rajab to enter and they have no concern for their wrongdoings then they do not truly possess *taqwā*. The believer sees his sins as a mountain towering over him that he fears will fall upon his head, whereas the hypocrite sees his sins as a fly that lands on his nose which he brushes away with his hand. One of the Followers was told that a group of people were talking about something which did not concern them. He said: “If they were concerned with their own wrongdoings they would not have talked about that subject.”

Seek forgiveness in abundance and seek to unite people’s hearts. Beware of provoking hatred, or tale bearing, for “among the worst slaves of Allāh are those that constantly bear tales, those that cause division between those that love each other.” Choose words that unite people: ***Say to My slaves that they should only say those things that are best, for the Devil sows dissension among them.***⁴

Attempt to fast in this month. `Alī bin Muḥammad al-Rabī` narrates from a chain of narrators; all of whom are reliable, that one of the Followers asked one of the Companions: “Did the Messenger of Allāh (may Allāh bless him and grant him peace) fast in Rajab?”

He replied: “Yes, and he would ennoble it.” He would ennoble and honour the month by fasting in it. May Allāh awaken our hearts!

Prepare for the first night of Rajab. He said (may Allāh bless him and grant him peace): “There are five nights on which du`ā’ is not rejected: the first night of Rajab, the fifteenth night of Sha`bān, Thursday night, the night before `Īd al-Fiṭr and the night before `Īd al-Naḥr (al-Aḍḥā).”⁵ Sayyidunā `Alī would spend this night in worship.

May Allāh purify our hearts and enable us to take advantage of the time that we have left in this life.

¹ *Al-Baqarah*, 2:217

² Narrated by Muslim

³ Narrated by al-Tirmidhī

⁴ *Al-Isrā’*, 17:53

⁵ Narrated by al-Suyūṭī