









Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī ¹







On Bidding Farewell to Ramaḍān

from the *Lata'if al-Ma'arif fi mā li Mawāsim al-Ām min al-Wadhā'if*


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It is reported in the *Sahihayn*² that Abu Hurayrah  narrates, that the Prophet  said, “Whoever fasts in the month of Ramaḍān with faith and seeking reward will have his sins forgiven; and whoever stands the night in prayer on *Laylat al-Qadr* with faith and seeking reward will have his sins forgiven.” In another *hadīth* narrated by Abu Hurayrah , Prophet  said, “Whoever undertakes the duties of Ramaḍān with faith and seeking reward will have his sins forgiven.” Additionally, al-Nasā'ī ³ reports a *hadīth* similar in wording, “Whoever fasts in the month of Ramaḍān with faith and seeking reward, will have his sins forgiven.”

‘Ubādah bin al-Sāmīt  has narrated a similar *hadīth* regarding prayer on *Laylat al-Qadr*.

It is mentioned that he who safeguards what is required of him to safeguard will have his sins forgiven. And it is reported in the *Musnad*⁴ of Imām Ahmad  and the *Sahīh* of Ibn Hibbān  from Abu Sa’id Al-Khudrī , that the Prophet  said, “Whoever fasts in Ramaḍān and has reached its limits and has safeguarded what he is expected to safeguard, will have his sins forgiven.” The general consensus of the scholars (*ulamā*) is that this covers minor sins as well. This is substantiated by a report of Imām Muslim ⁵ on the authority of Abu Hurayrah  that

¹ Note: All Qur’ān passages (for the most part) are from *The Gracious Qur’ān: A Modern-Phrased Interpretation in English*, Sixth Print. Hammad, Ahmad Zaki. Lucent: Lisle, IL, 2009.

² The Two Authentic Books, i.e. *Sahīh al-Bukhari* and *Sahīh Muslim*. This *hadīth* was narrated by al-Bukhari , #1901 concerning Fasting, the Chapter on the One Who Fasts in Ramaḍān with Faith and Seeking Reward.

³ Al-Nasā’ī 4:155-157 concerning Fasting, Chapter on the Reward for the One who Stands for Prayer with Faith and Seeking Reward

⁴ See the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad 3/55, *Sahīh ibn Hibban*, #879, *Mawārid*, *al-Tarḥīb wa al-Tarḥīb* 2/91.

⁵ See *Sahīh al-Muslim*, #233, concerning Purification, the Chapter on the Five Prayers, and Jum’uah to Jum’uah, and Ramaḍān to Ramaḍān are Expiations for What was Between Them. And the first to relate it was al-Tirmidhī in his *Sunan*, #214, concerning *Salāt*, the Chapter on What Came Related to the Merit of the Five Prayers.

the Prophet ﷺ said, “The five prayers, and from one *Jumu'ah* to the next *Jumu'ah*, and from Ramaḍān to Ramaḍān, are expiations for the sins committed between them, as long as one refrains from major sins.”

There are two interpretations for this;

First: The expiation of the minor sins is contingent upon refraining from the major sins, so, the major sins nor the minor sin will be expiated for a person who does not guard himself from committing major sins.

Second: The objective is that these compulsory acts (*fara'id*) are expiations for the minor sins specifically in all situations, whether the major sins were avoided or not avoided, however, the major sins will not be expiated.

Regarding standing for prayer on *Laylat al-Qadr*, Ibn Mundhir رحمه الله comments, “Certainly, there is hope for the forgiveness of all sins, both the major and the minor.” Other scholars have expressed similar opinions regarding the fast of Ramaḍān. However, the general consensus of the *'ulamā* is that sincere repentance is necessary for the forgiveness of the major sins. This issue has been discussed at length.

So, the *hadīth* of Abu Hurayrah رحمه الله proves the following three actions expiate those sins which preceded them, namely;

1. Fasting in Ramaḍān
2. Standing the night in prayer
3. And standing the night (in worship) on The Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*).

Standing (in worship) on *Laylat al-Qadr* is in itself an expiation of sins, as mentioned in the *hadīth* of 'Ubādah bin Ṣāmit رحمه الله, which we discussed at the beginning of this section. Irrespective of whether *Laylat al-Qadr* is in the beginning, the middle, or the end of the last ten days of Ramaḍān; or whether a person feels its presence or not. The expiation of those sins will not be delayed until the end of the month.

And as for both fasting and standing in worship in Ramaḍān, the expiation of sins for completing them is given at the end of the month. So, his previous sins will be forgiven upon the completion of fasting and standing (in worship) throughout Ramaḍān. It has also been said that he will be forgiven upon the completion of *salāt* in the last night of Ramaḍān, before the end of the morning. And the forgiveness by fasting will be delayed until the completion of the morning with

fasting. So, he will be forgiven by fasting on the eve of *'Īd al-Fiṭr*. This is evidenced by Imām Ahmad rah⁶ in the *hadīth* from Abu Hurayrah rah where the Prophet rah said,

“My community (*ummah*) was given five special gifts in Ramaḍān that no *ummah* before them was given:

1. The breath of those fasting was made more fragrant and beloved to God rah than even the scent of musk.
2. The angels ask forgiveness for those fasting until the time of *iftār*.
3. Every day of the month, God rah beautifies His Garden for the *ummah* and says to the Garden, ‘My servants are on the verge of shedding their burdens and impurities completely, and are heading towards you.’
4. The intensely mischievous devils are shackled throughout the duration of the month such that they cannot approach that what they could normally reach in other months.
5. The *ummah* is also forgiven on its last night.

So, he rah was asked, “O Messenger of God rah is this *Laylat al-Qadr*?” He rah replied, “No, but the laborer earns his reward when he completes his task.”⁷

It is said that those who fast will return to the Day of (*'Īd*) *al-Fiṭr* with forgiveness for their sins. The Day of *al-Fiṭr* is also known as the Day of Rewards in several weak *ahadīth*. Imām al-Zuhrī rah said, “On the Day of *al-Fiṭr*, the people come to al-Jabbān⁸, and God rah looks upon them and says, “O my servant! You fasted for me, and you stood in prayer for me, and so you will return forgiven.” Mu’arriq Al-‘Ijlī rah said to some of his companions sitting with him at the place of prayer (*musallah*) on *'Īd al-Fiṭr*, “Some people emerge on this day in the same state they were in on the day their mothers bore them, free of sin.” And in a *mursal hadīth* from Abu Ja’far al-Bāqir rah, it is said, “Whoever enters Ramaḍān and fasts during its days, performs his regular litanies (*wird*) in its nights, lowers his gaze, guards his private parts and his tongue and his hand from sin, performs his prayers in congregation, and arrives early for the Friday prayer; then he has fasted the month and has been rewarded, he has been rewarded for *Laylat al-Qadr*, and he has been given a special prize by the Lord rah.” Abu Ja’far rah comments, “This prize does not resemble that gifted by the kings of this world.”

⁶ See the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad 2/292, and it was mentioned by al-Haythamī in *Majma' Al-Zawa'id* 3/140, wherein he said, “It is related by Ahmad and al-Bazzār, and in it is Hisham ibn Ziyad Abu Al-Miqdām, and it is weak. For more, see *al-Matālib al-‘Āliyah* (932) and *Mushkil Al-Āthār* 4/142.

⁷ By this, the Prophet rah indicated that one who completes the Ramaḍān fast properly shall be forgiven upon completion of the month.

⁸ This was a place of prayer in the desert.

If those fasting complete the fast of Ramaḍān and the standing of its nights in worship, they have fulfilled their obligations, and will thus be remunerated with forgiveness. When they go out for the prayer on the day of 'Īd al-Fiṭr their rewards will be distributed to them. They will return to their homes attaining their full reward as we find in the *marfū'* hadīth of Ibn Abbas ؓ, "On the day of 'Īd al-Fiṭr, the angels descend toward the earth and stand at the openings of the paths calling out in a voice that can be heard by all of God ﷻ's creation—aside from men and jinns—saying, "O Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ! Come before a Generous Lord who will give you plenty, and forgive great sins!" And when they come out to the *musallah*, God ﷻ The Glorious, The Majestic then says to His angels, "O my angels! What is the recompense for the worker when he completes his duties?" They will reply, "Our Lord and Our Master! That you give them their full reward." So, He ﷻ says, "Verily, I testify to you that I have rewarded them for their fasting and their *salat* with My pleasure and My forgiveness. Depart ye all, forgiven." This has been reported by Salamah bin Shabīb ؓ in the book *The Merits of Ramaḍān*, and in others. Its chain (*isnad*) is known.

And this has also been narrated in another chain by 'Ikrimah ؓ on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas ؓ. Its chain is *mawqūf*.¹⁰

With that said, its meaning has been related with proper attribution to the Prophet ﷺ (with a *marfū'* chain) from other sources, albeit with some weakness, to the effect of, "Whoever fully completes what is required of them, will be fully recompensed. And whoever fully safeguards what is required of him, will be remunerated without delay."

مَا بَعْتُكُمْ مَهَجَتِي إِلَّا بِوَضْلِكُمْ وَلَا أَسْلَمْتُهَا إِلَّا يَدَا بِيَدٍ

I will not sell you my heart if you do not connect deeply with me;
Nor will I deliver my heart to you unless I can do so directly;

فَإِنْ وَفَيْتُمْ مَا قُلْتُمْ وَفَيْتُ أَنَا وَإِنْ أَبَيْتُمْ يَكُونُ الرَّهْنُ تَحْتَ يَدِي

And if you fulfil what you claim, I will fulfill my part too;
But if you refuse, then the collateral you have pledged will be mine.

Whoever falls short or is deficient in performing good deeds, will have his reward diminished in accordance to his deficiency. He will have none to blame but himself. Salman al-Farsi ؓ said, "Salāt is rewarded on a scale measured, whoever gives it its due is rewarded accordingly, and whoever is lax or negligent in their efforts (*taffafa*) ...then you know what has been said regarding the *mutaffifin*."¹¹ Fasting and all other good deeds are also rewarded in this fashion, whoever

⁹ A *marfū'* hadīth is a narration of the Prophet that is directly attributable to the Prophet ﷺ, as opposed to a *mawqūf hadīth* (to take one example), wherein the chain of narration (*isnad*) stops just short of the Prophet ﷺ (i.e. at a Companion).

¹⁰ A technical *hadīth* term, meaning that the *isnad* ends at a Sahabi (Ibn 'Abbas in this case), rather than ending with the Messenger of God ﷺ.

¹¹ See the statement of God ﷻ in *Surah al-Mutaffifin* (83:1-3): {Woe to the defrauders: those who when they take a measure in commerce take it in full; but when they give a measure in commerce, to them, or give a weight in trade, to them, they diminish it.}

discharges their deeds properly will be counted among God's choice servants who have been given *tawfiq*.¹² But woe be to the *mutaffifīn*, those who attempt to defraud God ﷻ in the performance of their deeds. How ashamed will be he who earnestly fills his scale with the fulfillment of his passions (*shahawāt*) on the one hand, but is dangerously negligent in filling their scale with fasting and *salāt* on the other—how far off the mark were the people of Midian!¹³ We see this also in a *hadīth*, “The most evil of men are those thieves who steal from their own *salāt*.”¹⁴ And if we know that woe is upon one stingy with his worldly (*dunyawī*) responsibilities, then imagine the state of such a person who had been stingy with their religious (*dīnī*) responsibilities on the Last Day! “Then destruction for those devotees, who are neglectful of their prayer.”¹⁵

غَدًا تُؤْتَىٰ النُّفُوسُ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَيَحْصُدُ الزَّارِعُونَ مَا زَرَعُوا

Tomorrow, all will be given their earnings;

Farmers will harvest their yield.

إِنْ أَحْسَنُوا أَحْسَنُوا لَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَإِنْ أَسَاءُوا فَبِئْسَ مَا صَنَعُوا

If they have performed good, they have done well to their own souls.

And if they have performed evil, then how wretched is that which they have produced.

The Pious Predecessors (*salaf*) ﷺ would strive to perfect, complete, and refine their deeds in every way, and upon completing them, they would pine after their acceptance in front of the Lord, fearing that they may be rejected. They were those who “give charitably all that they give, with trembling hearts.”¹⁶

Our Master 'Alī ﷺ is reported to have said, “Have more concern for the acceptance of your deeds than the fervor by which you performed them, for have you not heard God ﷻ say, “God ﷻ only accepts the offering of the God-conscious (*mutaqqīn*).”¹⁷ It is also narrated from Fadālah bin

¹² A detailed discussion of the word *tawfiq* is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that it is notoriously difficult to translate. Some have described it as that “enabling grace” by which the slave performs his good deeds. Without *tawfiq* from God ﷻ, good is simply not possible.

¹³ The venerable author here refers to the people of Midian (*Madyan*), to whom God ﷻ sent our master, the Prophet Shu'ayb. Among Midian's crimes were the fraudulent practices of its merchants, who would tamper with their weights and scales in order to cheat customers.

¹⁴ Imām Ahmad ﷺ narrated in his *Musnad* on the authority of Abu Qatāda that the Prophet ﷺ one said: “The most evil of men are those who steal from their *salāt*.” The people then asked, “O Messenger of God ﷻ, how does one steal from his *salāt*?” He ﷺ replied, “They do not completely make *rukū'* or *sujūd*.”

¹⁵ Qur'ān 107:4-5

¹⁶ Qur'ān 23:60

¹⁷ Qur'ān 5:27

'Ubayd¹⁸ ؓ who is reported to have said, “To know with certainty that God ﷻ has accepted from me a deed worth only the weight of a mustard seed is more beloved to me than the *dunya* and all that it contains, for God ﷻ says, ‘God ﷻ only accepts the offering of the God-conscious (*mutaqqīn*).’”

Malik bin Dinār¹⁹ ؓ said, “The fear that one's deeds may not be accepted must be of a greater intensity than that with which the deed was performed.” 'Atā' al-Silīmī ؓ²⁰ said, “The meaning of cautiousness is to safeguard one's deeds from not being for the sake of God ﷻ.” 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Abī Ruwād²¹ ؓ said, “I saw that the *salaf* would exert their utmost efforts in righteous deeds, but upon performing them, anxiety would befall them as to whether their deeds would be accepted or not.”

One of the Pious Predecessors (*salaf*) said, “The Companions of the Messenger of God ﷺ would regularly make *du'ā* to God ﷻ six months prior to Ramaḍān that He permit them to reach the holy month, and once they had reached it, they would regularly make *du'ā* for six months afterwards for it to be accepted from them.”

The Caliph 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz ؓ went out on the Day of 'Īd al-Fiṭr to give the *khutbah*, in which he said, “O men and women! You have indeed fasted for God's ﷻ sake for thirty days, you have prayed for thirty nights, and today you have emerged, beseeching God ﷻ to accept it from you.” One of the *salaf* would exhibit visible sadness on the day of 'Īd' al-Fiṭr, to the point where it was said to him, “Today is a day of joy and delight!” To which he replied, “You have spoken truly, but I am nothing but a slave, and my Master has commanded me to perform deeds solely for His sake, and I know not whether they will be accepted from me or rejected.”

¹⁸ Fadālah's full name was Fadālah bin 'Ubayd bin Nāfidh bin Qays, Abu Muhammad al-Ansarī al-Awsī, a Companion of the Messenger of God ﷺ. He was among those present at the All-Pleasing Allegiance under the tree (*Bay'at ur-Ridwān*) mentioned Qur'ān 48:18. He also served as a war commander during Mu'awiyah's reign as caliph, as well as a judge in Damascus. He died in the year 58 Hijrī. For more, see al-Dhahabī's *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* 3/113-117.

¹⁹ Ibn Dinar's full name was Malik bin Dinar ؓ, he also went by Abu Yahya. He was an ascetic, committed to the truth, among the storied Successors to the *Salaf*, and a master scribe of the Qur'ān. He died in the year 130 Hijrī. For more, see al-Dhahabī's ؓ *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* 5/362.

²⁰ His full name was Abu 'Abdillah bin Abi 'Ubaydah al-Basrī al-Silīmī ؓ. He was among the junior Successors after the *Salaf*. He was old enough to have met Anas bin Mālik ؓ, one of the star Companions of the Messenger of God ﷺ. He also was present to hear some of the discourses of Hasan al-Basri ؓ. He was an ascetic, and fervent in worship, and is known for his admonishing others to fear God ﷻ and to have contempt for the guiles of the *nafs*. It is said that he died after the year 140 Hijrī. For more, see al-Dhahabī's *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* 6/86; *Sifat al-Safwa* 3/325.

²¹ He was the the shaykh of Masjid al-Haram, and from among those great Imāms known to be a devout worshipper. Always truthful, he was an enemy of those who believed in the theological idea of *irjā'*, an explanation of which is beyond the scope of this translation. He died in the year 159 Hijrī. For more, see al-Dhahabī's *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* 7/184.

Wuhayb Ibn al-Ward²² ؓ once saw a group of people heedlessly laughing on the day of 'Īd. He remarked, "If their fasting has been accepted from them, then they ought to express gratitude, rather than behave as such. And if their fasting has not been accepted from them, then they ought to express fear, rather than behave as such." Hasan al-Basri ؓ said, "God ﷻ has made the month of Ramaḍān an arena for His creation to compete in His worship and in attaining His pleasure. Some have come out ahead, emerging victorious, while others have fallen behind, failing the test. Amazing and wondrous, then, is that player who gets the last laugh on that Day when doers of good see the light of victory, and purveyors of falsehood find nothing but loss."

لعلك عَضْبَانٍ وَقَلْبِي غَافِلٌ سَلَامٌ عَلَى الدَّارَيْنِ إِنْ كُنْتَ رَاضِيَا

When my heart is heedless of You, perhaps You are angered;

If You are pleased with me, I can leave both the dunya and ākhira behind.

It is narrated that 'Alī bin Abī Tālib ؓ would cry out in the last night of Ramaḍān, "If only I knew! If only I knew who would be accepted so that we might congratulate them! And if only I knew who would be deprived of acceptance, so that we might console them!" It is also narrated that Ibn Ma'sūd ؓ would say, "Who among us has been accepted, so that we might congratulate them? And who among us has been deprived of acceptance, so that we might console them?"

O accepted one! Congratulations to you! And O rejected one! May God ﷻ remedy that which has befallen you!

لَيْتَ شِعْرِي مَنْ فِيهِ يُقْبَلُ مِنَّا فَيُهَيِّئَنَا يَا خَبِيئَةَ المَرْدُودِ

O disappointed and rejected one!

If only I knew who among us would be accepted in Ramaḍān, so that he might be made joyous;

مَنْ تَوَلَّى عَنْهُ بِغَيْرِ قَبُولٍ أَرْعَمَ اللهُ أَنْفَهُ بِجَزِي شَدِيدِ

God will place an intense shame upon he who

turns away from Him without His acceptance.

What has the one lost who has missed the good that comes with Ramaḍān? And what has he who has been deprived of its good wrought for himself? How many are there whose reward will be acceptance and forgiveness, and how many are there whose reward will be disappointment and utter loss? Perhaps it is that one who stands in prayer all night but will not gain anything from it

²² His full name was Wuhayb bin al-Ward al-Qurashi, Abu 'Uthmān al-Makkī ؓ, and he was known for asceticism. He was considered a trustworthy narrator by Ibn Mu'in and al-Nasā'ī ؓ. Muslim, Abu Dawūd, al-Tirmidhī, and al-Nasā'ī ؓ narrate from him. Ibn Hibbān ؓ recorded that he died the year 153 Hijrī.

but sleeplessness, or that one who fasts all day but will not gain anything from it but hunger and thirst.

مَا أَصْنَعُ؟ هَكَذَا جَرَى الْمَقْدُورُ الْجُزْءُ لغيري وَأَنَا الْمَكْشُورُ

What good have I earned for myself? This is just my lot,

Others find themselves mended, yet I remain broken.

أَسِيرُ ذَنْبٍ مَقِيدٌ مَهْجُورٌ هَلْ يُمَكِّنُ أَنْ يُعَيِّرَ الْمَقْدُورُ

The most trifling of sins has left me feeling constricted and empty.

Is it possible to change one's fate?

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سَارَ الْقَوْمَ وَالشَّقَا يُشْعِدُنِي حَازُوا الْقَرَبَ وَالْحَقَا يُبْعِدُنِي

People march on, but my wretchedness has crippled me.

They've all attained proximity, but my gruffness has distanced me from God.

حَسْبِي حَسْبِي إِلَى مَتَى تَطْرُدُنِي أَعْدَائِي دَائِي وَكُلُّهُمْ يَقْصِدُنِي

O my God, o my reliance! Until when will you cease repelling me from your door?

My demons are an affliction, desiring to finish me for good.

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أَسْبَابُ هَوَاكَ أَوْهَنْتُ أَسْبَابِي مِنْ بَعْدِ حَفَاكَ فَالضَّرِي أَوْلَى بِي

In desiring You, I have been made enfeebled and emaciated.

Ever since You've turned away from me, pain has been my lot.

ضَاقَتْ جَيْلِي وَأَنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا بِي اِرْحَمِ، فَالْعَبْدُ وَاقِفٌ بِالْبَابِ

All my stratagems are of no use, you know exactly who I am.

So, have mercy—the slave stands outside Your door.

In Ramaḍān, the means of attaining God's forgiveness multiply, some of them are as follows:

- Fasting
- Standing the night in prayer, and standing on the Night of Power in worship, as was discussed earlier
- Giving *iftār* to those fasting and going easy on the servants that one may own. These two acts are specifically mentioned in a *hadīth* from Salmān al-Farsī ؓ.
- Remembering God ﷻ (*dhikr*). In a *marfū' hadīth*, it is said, "The one who remembers God ﷻ frequently (*dhākir*) in Ramaḍān is forgiven."²³
- Seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*). *Istighfār* is to request forgiveness from God ﷻ. The *du'ā* of the one fasting is answered during the fast as well as at the time of breaking his fast. It is for this reason that Ibn 'Umar ؓ when he would break his fast, would say, "O my dear God, O Ye vast in forgiveness! Forgive me!" There is also a *marfū' hadīth* from Abu Hurayrah ؓ regarding the virtue of the month of Ramaḍān, that those fasting "are forgiven, except he who balks and refuses." He was asked, "O Abu Hurayrah! Who are those who balk and refuse?" He replied, "The one who balks and refuses to seek God's forgiveness."
- The angels' seeking of forgiveness for those fasting until they break their fast.

Seeing as how the means to forgiveness markedly increase in Ramaḍān, the one who misses this opportunity has indeed been left supremely deprived.

Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates in the *Sahīh* of Ibn Hibbān ؓ²⁴ that the Prophet ﷺ once ascended the pulpit and said, "Āmīn! Āmīn! Āmīn!" He ﷺ was asked, "O Messenger of God ﷺ, we see that you have ascended the minbar and begun saying *āmīn*? For what reason?" He ﷺ replied, "Indeed, Jibrīl came to me and said, 'Whoever witnesses the month of Ramaḍān and leaves it without being forgiven shall enter the Fire, and God ﷻ will distance Himself from him, so say *Āmīn*!' And so I said, *Āmīn*! 'And whoever has one or both parents still alive and are not dutiful towards, and then dies, shall enter the Fire, and God ﷻ will distance Himself from him, so say *Āmīn*!' And so I said, *Āmīn*! 'And whoever mentions you to someone else, and he refuses to send prayers and blessings upon you, and then dies, shall enter the Fire, and God ﷻ will distance Himself from him, so say

²³ Al-Suyutī ؓ narrates this in his *al-Jami' al-Saghir*, #4312, and he cites al-Tabaranī's ؓ *al-Awsat* and al-Bayhaqī's ؓ *Shu'b al-Īmān*, on the authority of 'Umar bin al-Khattab ؓ. al-Haythamī ؓ also narrated this in his *Majma' al-Zawā'id* 3/143, commenting (with a caveat) that, "al-Tabaranī ؓ narrated this in *al-Awsat*, but his chain for this *hadīth* contains a one Hilal bin 'Abd al-Rahman, who is known to be a weak narrator." Hilal bin 'Abd al-Rahmān is found in al-Albānī's *Da'if al-Jami' al-Saghir*, #3038. See also Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani's ؓ *al-Tarḥīb wal-Tarḥīb* 2/104.

²⁴ See the *Sahīh* of Ibn Hibbān 2/121, the Chapter Concerning the Rights of Parents. Ibn Hibbān mentions that this chain is weak. For further analysis of its chain, see also Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani's *al-Tarḥīb wal-Tarḥīb* 2/93, 507.

Āmīn!’ And so I said, Āmīn!” Imām Ahmad رحمه الله²⁵ and Tirmidhī رحمه الله have also reported this *hadīth*. Ibn Hibbān رحمه الله reports it again in a different chain with a slightly different wording, which Imām Tirmidhī رحمه الله ranks as being *hasan*. Sa’id رحمه الله is reported as saying on the authority of Qatāda رحمه الله that, “Whoever is not forgiven in Ramaḍān will never be forgiven outside of it.”

Another *hadīth* states, "If one is not forgiven in Ramaḍān, then when can such an unforgivable person ever be forgiven? How can one rejected on the Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*) ever be accepted? How can one be rectified who fails to rectify himself in Ramaḍān? How can one be made healthy who carries within the dual diseases of ignorance and heedlessness? Any tree that does not bloom in Ramaḍān, the time when fruits are in full bloom, has indeed been cut off, and will soon become fuel for the Fire. Whoever neglects to sow seeds during planting season will not harvest anything on the Day of Harvest other than remorse and loss.

As the poet said:

ترَحَّلَ الشَّهْرُ وَاهْفَاءُ وَأَنْصَرَمَا وَاحْتَصَّ بِالْفَوْزِ فِي الْجَنَّاتِ مَنْ حَدَمَا

The Month has departed, O how it breezed by and expired!

*He who served and looked after Ramaḍān stands distinguished with the mark of victory,
triumphant in the gardens of Paradise.*

وَأَصْبَحَ الْعَاقِلُ الْمِسْكِينُ مِنْكَسِرًا مَثَلِي فِيهَا وَنَجْهُ يَا عَظُمَ مَا حُرِمَا

The poor, heedless one awoke to find himself still broken,

just like me. Woe is he, O how enormously deprived!

مَنْ فَاتَهُ الزَّرْعُ فِي وَقْتِ الْبَدَارِ فَمَا تَرَاهُ يَحْصُدُ إِلَّا الْهَمَّ وَالنَّدَمَا

Whoever fails to sow seeds during planting season,

harvests nothing but anxiety and remorse.

The month of Ramaḍān is a month wherein the first third of it is characterized by mercy, the second third is characterized by forgiveness, and the last third is characterized by liberation from the Fire. This *hadīth* was narrated by the Prophet ﷺ through Salmān al-Farsī رضي الله عنه. Ibn Khuzayma رحمه الله has reported it in his *Sahīh*.²⁶ The *hadīth* is also narrated through Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه. Ibn Abī Dunya رحمه الله and others have also reported it.

²⁵ See the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad 2/254, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* #2039, as well as in his *al-Da'wāt*, Chapter 110. Imām Ahmad says that the *hadīth* is *gharīb*. However, the *hadīth* is in fact *sahīh*, and there are many attestations to this from a plurality of the Companions. al-Hafiz al-Mundhirī conveyed this in his *al-Tarḥīb wal-Tarḥīb* 2/205-207.

²⁶ This is a portion of a *hadīth* narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah in his *Sahīh* 3/191, #1887 on fasting, in the Chapter Regarding the Merits of the Month of Ramaḍān. Its considered weak on account of the presence of 'Alī bin Zayd bin Jad'ān in its chain. Al-Bana said in

In reality, the entire month of Ramaḍān is characterized by mercy, forgiveness, and liberation. “Verily, the gates of mercy are flung open throughout Ramaḍān,” goes a sound *hadīth*.

Imām al-Tirmidhī رحمته²⁷ and others narrate another *hadīth* that, “Indeed, God ﷻ has people whom he liberates from the Fire, and this he does on every night of Ramaḍān.” But in the first third of the month, mercy predominates, a type of mercy specifically for those who do good and those who have *taqwa*. For God ﷻ says, “Indeed, the mercy of God ﷻ is ever near to those who excel in doing good.”²⁸ And in other verse, God ﷻ says, “And my mercy extends to everything. So, I shall write it for those who guard themselves against evil, and pay Zakāh.”²⁹

So, at the beginning of the month, the noble robes of mercy and Divine acceptance pour over those who have *taqwa*³⁰, and the People of *Ihsān*³¹ are treated with grace and beauty.

As for the middle of the month, forgiveness predominates it with those who fast being forgiven in the middle of the month even if they commit some minor sins; that does not prevent them from being forgiven, just as God ﷻ has said; “Yet, indeed, your Lord has much forgiveness for people, in spite of their wrongdoing”³²

And as for the last of the month, those who are overcome with crimes and who have made the Fire obligatory on themselves through their wrongs and Greater Sins are freed from the Fire.

And as narrated in the *marfū’ hadīth* of Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه, “To God belong one thousand one thousand³³ freed ones from the Fire at sunset for each night in the month of Ramaḍān.”

And if it is the night of Jumu‘ah or the day of Jumu‘ah, a thousand thousand people are freed from the Fire each hour, all of whom had made the punishment obligatory on themselves through their actions.

his *al-Fath al-Rabbānī* 9/233: Ibn Khuzaymah narrated it in his *Sahih*. He then continues, saying that it is *sahih* assuming its chain is sound. Abu Shaykh Ibn Hibbān also narrated it in his *al-Thawāb*.

²⁷ This is a portion of a faith narrated in *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* #682 on fasting, in the Chapter On What Has Been Related About the Bounty of Ramaḍān. It is also narrated in a *hadīth* graded as *sahih* by Ibn Majah #1643 on fasting, in the Chapter On What Has Been Related About the Bounty of Ramaḍān on the authority of Jābir, who said: The Messenger of God ﷺ said: “Indeed, God ﷻ has people whom he liberates people from the Fire at the time of *iftār*, and this he does on every night of Ramaḍān.” Imām Ahmad narrates a variation of this in his *Musnad* 2/254 on the authority of Abu Hurayra and Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri with a sound chain: “Indeed, God ﷻ has people whom he liberates people from the Fire every day and night of Ramaḍān, and every slave has an answered *du‘ā’* every day and night of Ramaḍān.”

²⁸ Qur‘ān 7:56

²⁹ Qur‘ān 7:156

³⁰ Consciousness / Due Regard for God

³¹ Meaning both excellence and beauty

³² Qur‘ān 13:6

³³ ‘one thousand one thousand’ (*alf alf*) is an Arabic way of saying one thousand thousands, meaning, one million.

And if it is the last night of the month of Ramaḍān, God ﷻ frees in the following day a number of people equal to all the people He previously freed from the Fire from the start of the month until its end. Salamah bin Shabīb ؓ and others have reported this narration. And, indeed, the day of the breaking of the fast at the end of Ramaḍān is a celebration for the whole ummah because the People of Greater Sins from amongst those who fast are liberated from the Fire on that day, and the sinners join the ranks of the pious. This is just as the Day of Sacrifice³⁴ (*Yawm al-Nahr*) is the greatest 'Īd because the Day of 'Arafah falls the day before, and the Day of 'Arafah is a day unlike any other in this earthly life since the most people are freed from the Fire on the Day of 'Arafah. So, whoever is freed from the Fire on those two days - the last day of Ramaḍān and the Day of 'Arafah - has much to celebrate on the day of 'Īd (the following day), and whoever misses the opportunity to be freed from the Fire on those two days has instead a day of reckoning.

Shiblī ؓ recites:

ليس عيدُ المحبِّ قَصْدُ المصلِّي وانتظارُ الأميرِ والسُّلطانِ

“The 'Īd of the lover is not reaching the *musallah* ³⁵
and waiting on the prince or ruler.

إِنَّمَا العِيدُ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَدَى اللَّهِ كَرِيمًا مُقَرَّبًا فِي أَمَانٍ

Rather, the 'Īd is for you to be in the presence of God,
ennobled, brought close in proximity to Him, in a state of peace.”

And one of the Knowers of God ﷻ³⁶ was seen on the night of 'Īd in an inconsolable state, crying over himself and reciting:

بِحُرْمَةِ غُرْبَتِي كَمْ ذَا الصُّدُودُ أَلَّا تَعْطِفَ عَلَيَّ أَلَّا تُجُودُ

By my inviolable estrangement, full of resistance;
will You not have pity on me and be generous.

سُرُورُ العِيدِ قَدْ عَمَّ النَّوَاحِي وَحُزْنِي فِي ازْدِيَادٍ لَا يَبِيدُ

The joy of 'Īd has spread in the near environs;
yet my sorrow increases and will not go.

فَإِنْ كُنْتُ أَفْتَرْتُ خِلَالَ سَوْءٍ فَعُدْرِي فِي الْهَوَى أَنْ لَا يَعُودُ

For if I committed wrongs during Ramaḍān,
my loving apology is that I will not return to them.

³⁴ The third day of Hajj

³⁵ The place wherein one prays the *salat*.

³⁶ *al-'Arifin*

And because forgiveness and freedom from the Fire are both based on fasting and praying at night during Ramaḍān, God ﷻ commanded that we magnify Him and thank Him at Ramaḍān's completion and said, "Rather, He wills, for you to complete the number of prescribed days - and that you shall extol God for the blessing of faith to which He has guided you, so that you may give thanks to Him alone for easing its way and establishing you therein."³⁷ So, thanking the One who blessed his servants; by facilitating their fast, by helping them to fast, and by forgiving them for the fast, and by their liberation from the Fire—is accomplished by remembering Him, thanking Him, and heeding Him and giving Him due regard as befits Him. And, Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ explained that *taqwa*³⁸ of God ﷻ is that He should be obeyed and not disobeyed, that He be remembered and not forgotten, and that He be thanked and not be shown ingratitude.

Therefore, O possessors of great sins,³⁹ take note of the spoils, the spoils in these generous days,⁴⁰ for there is no substitute to these priceless days. Behold how many of those who are guilty of outrages and crimes are freed from the Fire during these days; and whoever is freed from the Fire during these days has attained an all-encompassing prize and a vast gift.

O you who has been freed from the Fire by your Master! Do not dare return to the bondage of sins after you were freed. Do you draw close to the Fire as your Master distances you from it? And He saves you from the Fire while you land yourself in the Fire and do not swerve from it?

وَأَنَّ امْرَأًا يَنْجُو مِنَ النَّارِ بَعْدَمَا تَزَوَّدَ مِنْ أَعْمَالِهَا لَسَعِيدٌ

And a man who escapes from the Fire after provisioning himself with actions warranting it is felicitous.

If *rahmah*⁴¹ is for the *muhsinīn*,⁴² still the wrongdoer does not despair of it; and if forgiveness is written for those who have *taqwa*, still the one who oppresses his *nafs*⁴³ is not veiled from it.⁴⁴

إِنْ كَانَ عَقْلُكَ لَا يَرْجُوهُ ذُو خَطِيئَةٍ فَمَنْ يَجُودُ عَلَى الْعَاصِينَ بِالكَرَمِ

If one with wrongs cannot hope for Your total forgiveness who will be open-handed with generosity toward the transgressors

³⁷ Qur'ān 2:185

³⁸ Our Master 'Alī رضي الله عنه said, "Taqwa comprises of; the fear of God, acting in accordance to the Quran, being satisfied with less and preparing for the day of departure i.e death."

³⁹ The author is here addressing the reader directly.

⁴⁰ i.e. the days of Ramaḍān

⁴¹ Divine mercy.

⁴² Those doers of good who practice spiritual excellence, i.e. *ihsān*

⁴³ Soul, self

⁴⁴ "it" being forgiveness

Another poet says:

إن كان لا يرجوك إلا محسنٌ فمن الذي يرجو ويدعو المذنبُ

If only the *muhsin*⁴⁵ can have hope in You
Then who will the sinner ask of and call upon?

And another poet says:

لم لا يُرجى العفو من ربنا وكيف لا يطمع في حلمه

Why is total forgiveness⁴⁶ from our Lord not hoped for
and how could His forbearance not be coveted?

وفي الصحيحين أتى إنه بعده أرحم من أمه

In the *Sahīhayn*,⁴⁷ it is reported that God ﷻ is
more merciful toward His servant than the servant's own mother
[is to the servant].⁴⁸

God ﷻ says in the Qur'an, "Say, O Prophet: God declares to humanity, 'O My servants! Those of you who have committed sins in great excess against their own souls, never despond of the mercy of God! For, indeed, God forgives sins, one and all...'"⁴⁹

So, O disobedient one – and we are all such – do not despair of God's mercy because of the ill nature of your deeds; for many like you are freed from the Fire in these days. So, think well of your Master and repent to Him. For indeed no one is irretrievably lost before God except one who is truly damned.⁵⁰

إذا أوجعتك الذنوب فداوها برفع يد في الليل والليل مظلم

If your sins pain you, treat them
by lifting a hand in the darkness of night⁵¹

ولا تقنعن من رحمة الله إماماً قنوطك منها من ذنوبك أعظم

And do not despair from God's mercy for
that despair is itself a sin greater than your sins

⁴⁵ He who practices *ihsān* or spiritual excellence/beauty

⁴⁶ Total forgiveness = *al-afwu*; can also be translated as "complete pardon"

⁴⁷ The Two Authentic Books, i.e. *Sahīh al-Bukhari* and *Sahīh Muslim*.

⁴⁸ These two lines of prose are found in manuscript ب and ط but they are not in ع , ش , أ.

⁴⁹ Surat al-Zumar, Surah 39, Ayah 53.

⁵⁰ In manuscript ع and ط, it reads "For indeed the damned one is not irretrievably lost before God."

⁵¹ i.e. supplicating to God in the dark of the night

فَرَحْمَتُهُ لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ كَرَامَةٌ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لِلْمُذْنِبِينَ تَكْرُمٌ

For His mercy to the *muhsinīn* is a mark of honor for them
while His mercy to the *mudhnibīn*⁵² is a show of His generosity.

It is necessary for one who hopes to be freed from the Fire during Ramaḍān to undertake actions that make freedom from the Fire obligatory. Such actions are easy to undertake in this month. During the last part of Ramaḍān, Abu Qilābah ؓ used to free a beautiful, well-adorned handmaiden⁵³ in the hope that he would be freed from the Fire due to freeing her. And, in the *marfūʿ hadīth* of the companion Salman ؓ,⁵⁴ which is recorded in the *Sahīh* of Ibn Khuzaymah ؓ,⁵⁵ “Whoever provides the food upon which a fasting person breaks his fast during Ramaḍān, that will be a freeing of the Fire for the one who provided the food, and whoever lightens the burden of his bondsman during Ramaḍān, that will be an emancipation from the Fire.”

And in the same section of the same collection is the narration, “Increase in four actions during Ramaḍān, two that will please your Lord and two that you absolutely need. The two with which you will please your Lord are:

1. Bearing witness that there is no God but God, and
2. Seeking forgiveness.⁵⁶

As for the two that that you cannot do without, they are:

1. That you ask God for the Garden, and
2. That you seek protection in God from the Fire.

So, these are the four actions mentioned in this *hadīth*, each of which is a means for freedom from the Fire and for forgiveness. As for the Profession of Divine Unicity (*Kalimat al-Tawhid*),⁵⁷ it destroys sins and erases them completely, with no sin remaining, and no actions come before it. And it is the equivalent of the freeing of the slaves, which obligates the freedom from the Fire.

And whoever utters the *Kalimat ul-Tawhid* four times when he awakens in the morning and when he goes to sleep at night, God ؓ will free him from the Fire. And whoever says it sincerely, from his heart, God ؓ forbids the Fire from him.

⁵² Sinners

⁵³ In another manuscript, instead of “well-adorned” it reads a nursemaid.

⁵⁴ The printed edition adds “the Persian” here.

⁵⁵ 3/192 number 1887 in the “Fasting” section; the extraction of this narration was previously discussed.

⁵⁶ Instead of “seeking forgiveness” the collection also reads “and for you to seek His forgiveness”.

⁵⁷ *Kalimat al-Tawhid*, i.e. “*La ilāha illa Allāh*”

As for the *Kalimat al-Istighfār* (the Utterance of Seeking Forgiveness),⁵⁸ it is among the greatest causes of forgiveness. *Istighfār* is to pray for forgiveness, and the prayer of a fasting person is answered during his fasting state and when he breaks his fast.

The *marfū' hadīth* of Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه states, “People are forgiven in it [meaning Ramaḍān] except he who balks and refuses.” He was asked, “O Abu Hurayrah! Who are those who balk and refuse?” He, Abu Hurayrah, answered, “Whoever refuses to seek forgiveness from God, mighty and majestic.”

Al-Hasan رضي الله عنه⁵⁹ said, “Increase in seeking forgiveness from God for you know not when God’s mercy will descend.” And, Luqman رضي الله عنه said to his son, “O my son, accustom your tongue to seek forgiveness, for God has certain hours during which no seeker will be rejected.”

And God سبحانه has joined between *tawhīd* and *istighfār* in His saying, may He be exalted, “Know well, then, that there is no God but the One God. So steadfastly seek much forgiveness for your sin.”⁶⁰ It is also reported in some traditions that, “Satan said, ‘I have destroyed people with sins, and they have destroyed me with (saying) *La ilāha illa Allāh* and by making *istighfār*,” and *istighfār* is the seal of all righteous acts; you end your prayers, Hajj, and *Qiyām al-Layl*⁶¹ with it, and gatherings⁶² are concluded with it. If it is said in remembrance in the heart, it is like a stamp upon the heart, and, if it is said out loud, it is an expiation of sins for the action that was concluded with the utterance of seeking forgiveness. And, in the same vein, it is necessary that one’s Ramaḍān fasting be concluded with *istighfār*.

Umar ibn Abd al-‘Aziz رضي الله عنه⁶³ wrote to the various provinces under his rule, commanding them to conclude the month of Ramaḍān with *istighfār* and *sadaqah*,⁶⁴ *sadaqat al-fiṭr*,⁶⁵ for *sadaqat al-fiṭr* is a purification for the fasting person from idle talk and vulgarity. *Istighfār* mends what was depleted, by idle talk⁶⁶ and vulgarity, from one’s fasting. It is for this reason that one of the earlier scholars said, “Indeed, *Sadaqat al-Fiṭr* for the faster is analogous to the prostration of forgetfulness for the prayer.”

⁵⁸ The Phrase of Seeking Forgiveness (*Kalimat al-Istighfār*) is *Astaghfir Allāh al-Adhīm*

⁵⁹ This refers to the great Successor of the *Sahaba*, scholar, and knower of God, al-Hasan al-Basrī, may God have mercy on him.

⁶⁰ Qur’ān 47:19

⁶¹ Standing for prayer during the night.

⁶² Religious gatherings: *Majālis* (plural of “*majlis*”)

⁶³ The righteous Umayyad caliph; he was a great-grandson of Our Master Umar رضي الله عنه, and the eighth Umayyad caliph. Born 63 Hijrī and passed 101 Hijrī.

⁶⁴ Charity

⁶⁵ i.e. *Zakāt al-Fiṭr* (the generally obligatory amount of money due as charity before *‘Īd al-Fiṭr*, the holiday beginning on 1st of Shawwal following the end of the month of Ramaḍān).

⁶⁶ *Laghu* in Arabic.

Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ؓ, also instructed in his letter:

“Say what your father, our Master, Adam ؑ said, ‘Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves! And if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall most surely be among the losers of an everlasting Paradise.’⁶⁷ And say as our master Nūh ؑ said, ‘And if You do not forgive me and have mercy upon me, I shall be among the losers of an everlasting Paradise.’⁶⁸ And say as our master Ibrāhīm ؑ said, ‘And He is the One who I hope shall forgive me my misdeeds on the Day of Judgment.’⁶⁹ And say as our Master Mūsa ؑ said, ‘My Lord! I have, indeed, wronged myself, so forgive me . . .’⁷⁰ And say as our master Dhul-Nūn ؑ⁷¹ said, ‘There is no God but You! Highly exalted are You! Indeed, I was of the wrongdoers!’”⁷²

And it is reported that the Sahabi Abu Hurayrah ؓ said, “*Ghība*⁷³ rips apart one’s fast, and *istighfār* mends what was ripped from one’s fast.” So, whoever can present an undamaged fast should do so. Similarly, Ibn al-Munkadir ؓ states, “Fasting is a shield from the Fire so long as you do not damage it, and obscenity damages this shield. And *istighfār* mends the damage you have done.”

So, our fasting requires beneficial *istighfār* and righteous actions, which will intercede for our fast. How many times have we damaged our fasting through the (harmful) arrows of our words, then we mend our fasting despite the extent of the damage. How many times have we patched the tears in our fasting with the needle of good deeds, only to cut it again with the sharp sword of bad deeds. One of the righteous predecessors would ask God ﷻ for forgiveness upon finishing their *salat*⁷⁴ for the shortcomings therein, just as a sinner seeks forgiveness for his sins. If this is the state of the *muhsinīn*⁷⁵ regarding their worship, then how should the state of wrongdoers, such as us, regarding our worship be? Have mercy on the one whose good deeds are sins and whose obedience, all of it, consists of heedless acts.

⁶⁷ Qur’ān 7:23

⁶⁸ Qur’ān 11:47

⁶⁹ Qur’ān 26:82

⁷⁰ Qur’ān 28:16

⁷¹ Dhul-Nun is a name by which our master the Prophet Yunus ؑ is referred to in the Qur’ān and other Muslim sources. Imām al-Qurtubi ؓ in his *tafiir* writes, “Dhul Nūn is a name for the Prophet Yūnus ibn Matta ؑ due to his being swallowed by the *Nūn* and *Nūn* means Whale.” Thus, Dhul Nūn means the Man of the Whale/the Man of the Fish.

⁷² Surah al-Anbiya’ Verse 87 [21:87]

⁷³ Backbiting: saying behind someone’s back what that person would dislike, though what is said is true.

⁷⁴ A ritual prayer.

⁷⁵ Those who perform *ihsān*, i.e. those who practice spiritual excellence.

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ مِنْ صِيَامِي طُولَ زَمَانِي وَمِنْ صَلَاتِي

I seek forgiveness from God for the shortcomings in my fasting
and my prayers throughout my life.

صِيَامَنَا كُلَّهُ خُرُوقٌ وَصَلَاتِهِ أَيْمًا صَلَاتِي

Our fasting and prayer, all of it, is tattered with holes
And my prayer - what can I even say about my prayer?

مَسْتَيْقِظٌ فِي الدُّجَى وَلَكِنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنْ يَقْظِي سُبَاتِي

Though I am awake in the darkness of the night (in prayer),
my sleep is better than my wakefulness.

The instruction of the Prophet ﷺ to ‘Ā’isha ؓ to ask for a total pardoning from one’s sins (*afw*) during *Laylat al-Qadr*⁷⁶ also indicates the need for *istighfār* and good deeds; so, we should be like the believer who exerts himself in fasting and prayer in the Month of Ramaḍān, and who, when the end of Ramaḍān draws near and he encounters *Laylat al-Qadr*, asks God ﷻ for nothing except His *afw*, as if he were a criminal or neglectful. Silah ibn Ashyam ؓ⁷⁷ used to enliven the night,⁷⁸ and he would say in his *du’ā* at the time of *suhūr*,⁷⁹ “Our Lord, I ask You to keep me from the Fire, and it would be audacious for one like me to ask you for the Garden.” Likewise, Mutarrif ؓ⁸⁰ used to say in his *du’ā*, “Our Lord, be pleased with us; and if you are not pleased with us, then pardon us.”

Yahya bin Mu’ādh ؓ said, “A gnostic is one who’s ultimate objective is to attain God’s pardon.”

إِنْ كُنْتُ لَا أَصْلِحُ لِلْقُرْبِ فَشَأْنُكُمْ عَفْوٌ عَنِ الذَّنْبِ

Even if I did not mend my ways to draw near You,
Your affair is the complete pardon of sin

⁷⁶ The Night of Destiny/Power. Our Mother A’isha ؓ asked the Prophet ﷺ what *du’ā* she should make if she were to be worshipping on the *Laylat al-Qadr*. He advised her to say, “O God! You are the One who pardons sin completely [*afuwun*], and you love to pardon [*afwu*], so pardon me.”

⁷⁷ Silatu bin Ashyam ؓ was a scholar, a narrator of hadīth, and a Successor (*tābi’i*), one of those who followed the Companions; he was also a martyr in the way of God. He was married to the righteous *tābi’i* scholar and hadith narrator, Mu’adhah bint Abdullah al-‘Adawiyah ؓ. Imām al-Dhahabi ؓ calls him, “the ascetic, the fervent worshipper, the role model, Abu Sahbaa’ al-‘Adawee al-Basri, the husband of the female scholar, Mu’aadhah al-‘Adawiyah ؓ.”

⁷⁸ Enlivening the night means to perform acts of worship and devotion throughout the night, e.g. praying.

⁷⁹ The time before dawn enters.

⁸⁰ Mutarrif ibn Abdullah ؓ was a scholar and a Successor, i.e. from the second generation of Muslims.

The most beneficial form of seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) is that which is accompanied by repentance (*tawba*), and *tawba* is the solution to the problem of persistent sinning.⁸¹ But whoever seeks repentance with his tongue while his heart remains inclined to committing acts of disobedience, is determined to return to disobedience after Ramaḍān, and does, in fact, return to sin, then his fasting is rejected, and the gate of acceptance (by God of his fasting) is blocked.

K'āb رضي الله عنه said, “Whoever fasts in Ramaḍān with a firm resolution that when Ramaḍān is complete he will not disobey God, will enter the Garden without any questioning or reckoning. And whoever fasts Ramaḍān firmly intent upon disobedience at its completion, his fast is rejected.” This was narrated by Salamah bin Shabīb رضي الله عنه.⁸²

ولولا التُّقى ثمَّ التُّهى حَشِيَّةَ الرِّدى لعاصيت في وقت الصِّبا كُلَّ زاجر
*Were it not for piety, then intellect and fear of ruin;
 I would have defied every restriction as often as the breeze blows.*

فَضَى ما فَضَى فيما مَضَى ثمَّ لا تُرى لَهُ عَوْدَةٌ أُخْرَى اللَّيالي العَوَّابر
*Yet, He decreed whatever He willed in what has come to pass;
 Bygone nights will not be seen returning once more.*

In the *Sunan* of Abu Dawūd رضي الله عنه and other (books of narration), it is reported on the authority of Abu Bakrah رضي الله عنه, that the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “None of you should say, ‘I fasted Ramaḍān’ or ‘I stood in worship throughout the whole month.’” Abu Bakrah رضي الله عنه comments, “I do not know if this was because he disliked ascribing piety to one’s self (*tazkiyah*) or that there was no way to avoid some degree of negligence in our acts of worship.”

Where is the one who when he fasts, safeguards the fast, and the one who when he stands in worship, is truly upright in establishing the *qiyām*? Such people have perfected their Islam and have departed from this world in peace; none now remain except those who, if they fast, boast and brag, and who, if they stand to pray at night, are enamored with themselves. What a difference exists between those free from worry and anxiety, between one conscious of life's purpose and those unaware, and from those who conceal their good deeds and those who display them.

⁸¹ Or insistence on sin.

⁸² He is Salamah ibn Shabib al-Nisapuri رضي الله عنه, and his background has been mentioned in a previous section..

And what are from the most important *du'ā* concerning asking for paradise and refuge from Hellfire? The Prophet ﷺ said, "It is regarding those two (*Jannah* and *Jahannam*) that we are whispering."⁸³

So, the one who fasts hoping for the acceptance of his *du'ā*, should not make a *du'ā* except for the most important of matters. Abu Muslim رضي الله عنه⁸⁴ said, "No opportunity for *du'ā* arose except that I used it to seek protection from the hellfire, and he said "The people of Hell and the people of Paradise are not equal. The people of Paradise are the successful."⁸⁵

In the *hadīth*, "Seek the best of all of your time,⁸⁶ present yourself to the breezes of your Lord's mercy because God has breezes from His mercy that are granted to whomsoever of His servants that He wills. And ask God that He hides your weaknesses and that He provides you security in states of fear. So, whoever is touched by the breeze of mercy, becomes successful and he will never become unsuccessful ever. And from the greatness of His breezes is the swiftness in the timing of acceptance when the servant asks for Paradise and protection from the Hellfire, and so his request is granted and he becomes victorious with eternal success.

God ﷻ says, "So, whoever has been kept away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has really succeeded."⁸⁷

And He ﷻ also says, "As for those who are wretched, they shall be in the Fire. For them there is nothing but crying and howling."⁸⁸

He ﷻ also says, following that, "As for those who are blessed, they shall be in Paradise."⁸⁹

⁸³ Part of the *hadīth* narrated from Abu Dawūd رضي الله عنه in the chapter on prayer states, "That the Messenger of God ﷺ said to a man, 'How do you say (ask for paradise and protection from the hellfire) in the prayer? He (the man) said, 'I make *tashahhud*, then I say, 'Oh God, indeed I ask you for the paradise, and I seek refuge with you from the hell fire, but indeed I am not better than your humming or the humming of Mu'adh", so the Messenger of God ﷺ said, 'around humming is that of mine and Mu'adh.'" This narration also appears in the *musnad* (V. 3, number 474) of Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal رضي الله عنه, and from Ibn Majah from a *hadīth* narrated by Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه, in the chapter on establishing the prayer (number 910) and specifically in the section on what to say in *tashahhud* and the prayer of the Prophet ﷺ. And al-Busayri رضي الله عنه in *Al-Zawad* said, "the chain of transmission for this *hadīth* is sound and its men (in the chain) are trustworthy."

⁸⁴ Abu Muslim Al-Khawlanī, Abdullah bin Thuwāb رضي الله عنه. One of the Successors, a jurist, a devout worshipper, and an ascetic. He accepted Islam before the demise of the Messenger of God ﷺ, but did not meet him, however. He passed away in Damascus and was buried in Daraya in the year 62 Hijrī. A detailed biography can be found in the book, "The History of Damascus," 484 - 525, published by *Majma' al-Lughat al-Arabiyya*, Damascus.

⁸⁵ Qur'ān 59:20

⁸⁶ Ibn Abi Dunya رضي الله عنه narrated this *hadīth* in collection titled "Release After Going Through Severity," #27, on the authority of Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه; Al-Bayhaqī رضي الله عنه narrated it as well in his *Shu'b al-Iman*, also on the authority of Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه. Imām al-Tirmidhī رضي الله عنه too narrates it, as does Abu Nu'aym رضي الله عنه in *al-Hilya*, on the authority of Anas bin Malik رضي الله عنه. It is a weak *hadīth*.

⁸⁷ Qur'ān 3:185

⁸⁸ Qur'ān 11:106

⁸⁹ Qur'ān 11:108

ليس السَّعِيدُ الَّذِي دُنِّيَاهُ تُسْعِدُهُ إِنَّ السَّعِيدَ الَّذِي يَنْجُو مِنَ النَّارِ

He is not truly successful the one who succeeds in this worldly life;

Indeed, the truly successful one is the one who is protected from Hellfire's flame.

O Servants of God! Indeed, the month of Ramaḍān has determined to depart, and nothing but a little of it remains. So, whoever from you spent it well should finish it the same way, and whoever is falling behind should finish it in the best manner, for the reward of actions are determined by their ending.

So, benefit from it what has remained of its passing days and nights, and bequeath to it good actions that will testify for you in the presence of the All-Knowing King, and bid farewell to it at the time of its departure with the purest greetings and with peace.

سَلَامٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ كُلِّ أَوْانٍ عَلَى خَيْرِ شَهْرٍ قَدْ مَضَى وَزَمَانٍ

*Peace from the Merciful every time
upon the best month that has passed.*

سَلَامٌ عَلَى شَهْرِ الصِّيَامِ فَإِنَّهُ أَمَانٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ أَيَّ أَمَانٍ

*Peace upon the month of fasting for it is
a sanctuary from the most Merciful for all the protection that you need.*

لَيْفُنْ فَنَيْتُ أَيَّامَكَ الْعُرُ بَعْتَةً فَمَا الْحَزْنَ مِنْ قَلْبِي عَلَيْكَ بَغَانٍ

*Even if your days of loftiness have passed quickly,
the sadness my heart has for you will not go away.*

Indeed, its days have passed, and you did not take heed, and the sins of this month and what you lost have been written upon you, and you are just like the ones who busy themselves in disobedience, until they overreach and are cut off! Do you see yourself in this reproach? Have you not heard?!

مَا ضَاعَ مِنْ أَيَّامِنَا هَلْ يُعْرَمُ هَيْهَاتَ وَالْأَزْمَانُ كَيْفَ تُعْوَمُ

*What can be ransomed from what has been lost from our days,
how far-fetched! How can the times be regained?*

يَوْمٌ بِأَرْوَاحٍ يُبَاعُ وَيُشْتَرَى وَأَخُوهُ لَيْسَ يُسَامُ فِيهِ دِرْهَمٌ

*That Day in which the souls are sold and bought
That Day when one's own brother will refuse to give a single dirham towards bail.*

The hearts of the *muttaqīn* in this month are happy; and from the pain of its separation, they feel hurt.

دهاك الفراق فما تصنع أتصبرُ للبين أم تجزعُ

*Separation from one's beloveds has overwhelmed you, but what can you do now?
Can you endure this distance, or will you be engulfed in anguish?*

إذا كنت تبكي وهم جيرة فكيف تكون إذا ودعوا

*If you cry over their leaving while they remain your neighbors,
What will be your state when they finally bid you farewell?*

How do the tears not run down for the believer upon its separation, and he does not know if he has years left for him to return to it (the month of Ramaḍān)?

تذكرت أياماً مضت و لياليا خلّت فجزت من ذكرهنّ دموع

*Tears flowed from my eyes when I remembered those days and nights
that have now passed.*

ألا هل لها يوماً من الدهر عود وهل لي إلى وقت الوصال رجوع

*Will there come another day in time when those days and nights return?
And will I have a chance to return to them to?*

وهل بعد إعراض الحبيب تواصل وهل لبدورٍ قد أقلنّ طلوع

*And will there be a connection after the Beloved has turned away?
And will full moons, having set, ever rise again?*

Where is the burning of the strivers (*mujtahidīn*) in its day? Where is the restlessness of the prayers of *tahajjud* in its dawn?

استمع أنين العاشقين إن استطعت له سماعا

*Hear the wailings of the lovers
if you are able to hear it.*

راح الحبيب فشيئته مدامعي تهمي سراعاً

*The beloved has gone away,
so my tears have come down quickly and forcefully.*

لو كلف الجبل الأصم فراق إلفٍ ما استطاعا

*If the deaf and mighty mountain was burdened with tolerating such,
it would not be able to bear the pangs of separation.*

If there is regret for the one who benefited from it, then what will be the condition of the one who lost out on its days and its nights? What will benefit the one who cried excessively, and his ordeal magnified in it and his grief increased? How much was the *miskīn*⁹⁰ advised but did not accept the advice? How much was he invited to reform but he did not respond? How many people he witnessed reaching their objectives while he stayed away from it. How many times he passed by the group of those who were walking while he was sitting, until the time became short and anger came between him. He became remorseful over his negligence at the time when remorse does not benefit him, and he sought to reach it in the time where it was no longer there.

أترك من أحبُّ وأنت جازٍ وتطلبهم إذا بعُدَ المرزأ

*Did you leave those you claim to love while they resided near you as neighbors,
but you seek them out now, when traveling to visit them has become a journey?*

وتبكي بعُدَ نأيهم اشتياقًا وتساءل في المنازل أين ساروا

*And you cry out in longing after they have gone, seeking to meet them
asking the entire town, 'Where have they left to?!'*

تركت سؤالهم وهم حضورٌ وترجو أن تُخبرك الديار

*You yourself ignored their petition while they were present nearby,
Yet now you regretfully hope after them, asking for details of their whereabouts.*

فنفسك لم ولا تلم المطايا ومث كمدًا فليس لك اعتذار

*So, blame yourself, blame not those camels that carried them away.
Die heartbroken, for you have no excuse.*

O month of Ramaḍān, show us affection, the tears of the lovers flow, their hearts split from the pain of separation. Perhaps pausing a bit to bid farewell to you will help put out what the fire of passion has kindled, perhaps a moment of repentance and restraint will mend all that was torn from the fast; perhaps one cut off from the caravan of the *maqbulīn* (those whom God accepts) will be able to follow them; perhaps the prisoner of burdens will be relieved; perhaps the one for whom the Fire is obligatory will be liberated from its torment; perhaps the mercy of the Master will be facilitated for the sinner.

⁹⁰ Someone poor with whom one has great sympathy.

عَسَىٰ عَسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلِ وَقْتِ التَّفَرُّقِ إِلَىٰ كُلِّ مَا تَرَجُّو مِنْ الْخَيْرِ تَرْتَقِي

*And perhaps, perhaps, before the time comes to part
you will attain all the good for which you hoped*

فِيَجِبُ مَكْسُورٌ وَيَقْبَلُ تَائِبٌ وَيَعْتَقُ خَطَّاءٌ وَيَسْعَدُ مَنْ شَقِيَ

*Such that the broken will be repaired, and the one who repents from sin will be accepted,
and the sinner will be relieved, and the unfortunate will be become fortunate.*