

A Message by Sheikh Ahmed from Madinah

“The area between my house and my *minbar* is one of the gardens of Paradise, and my *minbar* is on my cistern (hawd)” [Bukhari]

How can a believer know this saying of the beloved Prophet Muhammed SAW and resist the temptation to pray in this piece of Paradise on earth? I have been trying to do the same since I came to Madinah but have not yet succeeded. In fact, this is the second Ramadan during which I have tried and failed to pray in this blessed spot. The truth is that I refuse to shove and push like the others, and cause aggravation to anyone just to be able to pray there.

Today I got closer to this piece of Jannah and was watching the discourteous struggle among people over this blessed place and a thought occurred to me... What is this struggle all about? What is the real reason for all this fight and rudeness for? What is it that they are trying to achieve? The blessing of a place?

What happens if I reach the blessed place and my heart is not clean?

What happens if I reach the place and I am not accepted by Allah SWT?

There are blessed places and blessed times which Allah SWT has chosen for us, but do we really understand their meaning and purpose?

It struck me that the companions of the Prophet SAW never would have done what we are doing today. Now we run after gaining the blessing of a place and time, not even minding to hurt others in the process, because we are devoid of the reality of *Iman* and real actions.

I thought of Awais Al-Qarani who didn't spend time in these blessed places yet had such a special status with Allah SWT that Prophet Muhammed SAW advised Umar (RA) to request him for *du'a*. I thought of what Prophet SAW said once while circumambulating the Ka'bah “How pure you are and how pure is your fragrance! How great you are and how great is your sanctity! By the one in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the sanctity of the believer is greater to Allah than your sanctity; his wealth, his life, and to think nothing of him but good.” [Ibn Majah]

This earth, time, and place will come to an end but the heart of a believer will never have an end, it will go on to enjoy the infinite pleasure of jannah InshaAllah. Then how can we neglect our hearts, and hurt others' hearts, emotions, and feelings—all the while attempting to gain the blessing of a time and place?

Isn't it more important to decorate our hearts with *Iman*? Isn't it worthier to get closer to Allah SWT by performing the actions beloved to Allah SWT?

There are many ways to get closer to Allah SWT. Allah SWT made certain times and places as means of achieving this closeness, but the ultimate mean is our heart and its connection with Allah SWT. Our heart has no boundary, no restriction of time and place, and no barriers. It has an open access to its Lord 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, irrespective of anything. Allah SWT has assured us of this direct, unlimited connection with Him in the Qur'an saying:

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

“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.” [Al-Baqara 2:186]

Along with the channel of *du'a* we have the sayings of Rasul Allah SAW in which he emphasized good manners as means of getting closer to Allah SWT and to him SAW.

“Those of you who will be closest to me on the Day of Judgment will be those who have the best akhlaaq.” [Bukhari]

Is there any better blessing than being close to the Prophet SAW on the Day of Judgment?

Allah SWT has showed us another way in the following Hadeeth Qudsi saying

من شغله القرآن وذكرني عن مسألتني أعطيته أفضل ما أعطي السائلين وفضل كلام الله على سائر الكلام
كفضل الله على خلقه [رواه الترمذي]

“Whoever is too busy with the Qur'an for remembering Me and asking Me, then I shall give him more than what I give to those who ask.' And the virtue of Allah's Speech over the speech of others is like the virtue of Allah over His creation.” [At-Tirmidhi]

Don't forget the virtues and blessings of sending prayers on the Prophet SAW (salah 'alan nabi/durood shareef)!

Rasul Allah SAW said: “Whoever supplicates Allah to exalt my mention (i.e., send salah), Allah will exalt his mention (i.e., send salah) ten times and remove from him ten sins and raise him ten degrees.” [Muslim]

What about when Abdur Rahman ibn Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) came to the Prophet SAW while he was in prostration and he elongated his prostration and then said, “Jibreel came to me and he said, 'whoever sends blessings (salah) upon you, I will send blessings on him, and whoever sends greetings (salaam) upon you, I will send greetings upon him,' so I prostrated out of thankfulness to Allah.” [Haakim]

Can there be greater blessings than receiving exalted mention from Allah SWT and receiving greetings from Jibreel AS?

My dear brothers and sisters, yes Allah SWT has chosen certain time and places but we must not forget the main purpose behind them. Their purpose is to give us the opportunity of receiving additional closeness and mercy of Allah SWT. But this closeness and mercy is by no means restrictive and limited to any particular time and place. Our hearts can receive it anytime and anywhere.

How can we neglect what is mandatory which is respect and consideration of other believers, and expect to receive blessing of a place? How can we oppress others and be inconsiderate and mischievous, and still hope to attain closeness of Allah SWT? How much more odious when we display these behaviors in the holiest places? This is mainly because of lack of proper understanding and *Iman*.

Logically, we should perform additional good deeds, do a lot of dhikr and *du'a*, and have proper manners and etiquettes *before* we go about seeking the additional blessings of a specific time and place. Instead we do the opposite and sever our connection with Allah SWT by oppressing others, causing mischief, terrible manners, and after that we attempt to gain blessings.

My dear brothers and sisters, this is a very important topic and we must not underestimate its significance. Do not forget that your heart, your *Iman*, your manners, and your good deeds are the prerequisites for you to gain any additional blessings. May Allah SWT give us the vigilance of our actions and proper awareness to make the most of all blessed times and places. Ameen.