

July 15, 2011

Khutbah



Title: Traditions to Observe the Middle of Sha'ban

DVD title: Traditions to Observe Nisfu Sha'ban

Opening duas. I'd like to speak briefly today about Nisfu Sha'ban. As you know, Sha'ban is the eighth month in the Islamic lunar calendar. It is called that because this is the month the believers used to disperse (*tasha'aba*) in search of water. It was so called because it branches out or emerges (*sha'aban*) between the months of Rajab and Ramadan. In a *hadith*, Hazrat Osama (ra) reports that the Prophet Muhammed (sal) said:

There is a month between Rajab and Ramadan called Sha'ban. People are ignorant about this month, even though the reward of each deed within it is greater than any other month, and one's deeds are presented to Allah (swt).

It was also reported that the Messenger of Allah said, "***Sha'ban is my month.***" Hazrat Anas narrated that upon the arrival of the month of Rajab, the Prophet (sal) used to pray, "***O Allah! Bless us abundantly in Rajab and Shaban, and deliver us safely to Ramadan.***" And again, Osama ibn Azaya said, "***O Messenger of Allah, I do not see you fasting in any other month like you fast in Sha'ban.***" He said, "***That is the month in which people do not pay attention, between Rajab and Ramadan. It is the month in which deeds are lifted up to the Lord of the Worlds. I like for my deeds to be lifted up when I am fasting.***"

So when Sha'ban began, the Prophet (sal) still had some voluntary fasts outstanding that he had not fasted. That's when he would make them up, so that all of his supererogatory and *nafle* fasts would be complete before Ramadan came. Also, if he had missed any *sunnah* prayers or night prayers, he would make these up in Sha'ban. Aisha (ra) used to

make up any obligatory Ramadan fasts she had missed because of her cycle, during Sha'ban. We should also note that anyone who has missed any fasts should make this up before the next Ramadan. Because it's not permissible to delay until after the following Ramadan, except in cases of necessity. For those with chronic illnesses, of course it is different. Whoever is able to make them up before the second Ramadan and doesn't do so, has to make them up after the second Ramadan, and in addition to that, has to feed one poor person for each day he or she has missed.

Another benefit of fasting in the month of Sha'ban is that it is a kind of training, obviously, for Ramadan. If you find it difficult to fast when Ramadan starts, if you fast during Sha'ban, you will find that you feel stronger. Sha'ban is like an introduction to Ramadan. It has some things in common, such as reciting Qur'an and giving charity. Salma ibn Suhail used to say, "*The month of Sha'ban is the month of reciters of Qur'an.*" Habib Athabit used to say when Sha'ban came, "*This is the month of reciters.*"

In another *hadith*, the Prophet (sal) said, "**When the blessed month of Sha'ban reaches you, it cleanses your spirit to receive the blessed month of Ramadan. So purify your intention. Surely the greatness of Sha'ban is like my greatness of over all prophets. Be mindful. Sha'ban is my mouth, and for any who can fast in it, my intercession will be wajib.**" One should fast on the 13th, 14th, and 15th. If not all three, then fast on the 15th. Concealing one's good works, hiding and concealing one's *nawafil* prayers and actions is better, especially fasting, because it is a secret between the slave and his Lord. It is said there is no good in showing off fasting. One of the *salaf* used to fast for years without anybody knowing it. He would go from his home to the marketplace carrying two loaves of bread, which he would give away in charity, and he would fast.

The majority of traditional Muslims believe that this blessed month is when the lists of people who will pass this year are created. It is one of the beliefs that is centered around the excellence of the middle of the month, Nisfu Sha'ban. Most people will be devoted

on this night. So, we should plan on the day and begin with the *hadith*, which you know. Hazrati Aisha wakes to find the Prophet (sal) not beside her in the bed. She touches his feet and finds he is making these prostrations. He says, “***Allah, Glorious and Exalted is He, descends to the nearest heaven on the night of mid-Sha’ban, and He forgives more people than the number of hairs on the hides of the flocks in the herds of sheep in the Tribe of Qab.***” It is recorded in books that the tribe of Qab used to have the greatest number of sheep in Arabia. Some of the unfortunate people are still not forgiven on this night: those who are habitual drinkers, those who are habitual adulterers, those who are disobedient to their parents, those who break family ties, those who are mischief spreaders, and those who are backbiters. One narration says ‘the mischief spreader’ is replaced by ‘those who make pictures;’ another narration says ‘those who practice magic or eat *riba*.’ Anyway, you get the idea.

It is recorded that the friends of Allah, the *awliyā* Allah, used to pray six cycles of prayer after the Maghrib prayer on this night. The first two *rak’as*, add to the intention that the blessing will extend one’s life with harmony. The next two *rak’as* is for protection from misfortune and evil; and the final two *rak’as*, Allah make us dependent on Him and no one else. After every two cycles, recite Sura Ikhlas 21 times and Sura Ya Seen once. If possible, read both for greater rewards and then recite the du’a for Nifsu Sha’ban.

O Allah, tireless Owner of bounty, O Owner of sublimity, honor, power, and blessings, there is no Allah except You, the Support of refugees, Neighbor of those who seek nearness, Guardian of the fearful. O Allah, if You have written in the Mother of the Book that I be abject, banished and tight-fisted, then erase O Allah through Your bounty my misery, deprivation, banishment and stinginess, and establish me with You as happy and provide me with blessing. For surely You have said, and your word is true, in the revealed book, on the tongue of Your Messenger, Allah effaces and establishes what He wills, and with Him is the Mother of Books. By Allah, by the great manifestation of the night of the middle

of Sha'ban, in which every affair of wisdom is made distinct, remove from us calamities, those we know and those we don't know. And You know the best, for surely You are the most Mighty and most Gracious. May Allah bless Muhammed and his family and his companions.

So there are many, many other traditions and *hadith* that support the traditions of this month. If we find in this night that we have things still left to do, now is the time to commit to do them. When we understand that these *hadith* are to inspire us, that's even better. When you perform good deeds, good deeds are *nawafil*. When you make a little extra effort, that's *nafle*. If you fast, it's *nawafil*. It's those deeds that are brought to Allah. Allah says that it's not you that I appreciate. It's the deeds you do. The deeds you do are brought to Me. When those deeds are brought to Me, I will speak through your lips, and see through your eyes, and I will walk through your feet. If you do good deeds, then I will love you; and if I love you, I will do those things. The actions we do are always accountable. When we choose to do good actions, and we choose to make an extra effort, then Allah reveals to us the beauties and benefits of Islam and of these days. So, *inshā'a-Llāh*, you will forgive the brevity of this. You get the message. Duas.

O Allah, we ask you for your healing blessings for every member of this community, and to uplift our hearts as well and fulfill our soul's journey. We ask you for better ways to serve you. For those who have passed in this past week, we ask you for their life to be meaningful and their souls to be brought near to you if you find them so deserving. We ask you Allah to secure our future, with greater health, and to support our life and our work, and the company of more and more blessed people. *Amin.*