

July 29, 2011

Khutbah



Title: Fasting and Making Effort during Ramadan

Ramadan: Allah Brings us Near and Gives us Ease

Opening duas. Asalaamu aleikum. Today, brothers and sisters, we draw of course from Surah Baqarah, and you remember that Surah Baqarah is sort of a mini-Qur'an. It's a good thing to study in depth in the month of Ramadan. Allah says:

The month of Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an came down as a guidance for the people and clear proof of that guidance and discrimination. Whoever from among you lives to see the month, let him fast it. If any of you are sick or traveling, then make it up on the same number of other days. Allah wants ease for you, and does not want hardship for you. He wants you to fulfill the number of days and to magnify Allah for having guided you, and give thanks to Him.

The very next 'āyat that comes in the Qur'an you would think would be a further explication of Ramadan. But it's not. It says this:

And when My worshipers ask you about Me, know that I am near. I will answer the call of the caller when he calls Me, so let them respond and believe in Me that they may be rightly guided.

Then what happens? Then we go back to Ramadan. Then it goes into detail about fasting.

What conclusion can you draw from that? (Responses). How about just the simple fact that Allah is telling you how near He is to you during the month of Ramadan? That the whole month of Ramadan is about you to reflect on the fact that Allah is near to you during this whole month. Allah is near to us all the rest of the time, yes; but this is Ramadan. In Ramadan you have the opportunity to do a certain kind of practice that allows you to be aware of the fact of how near to you Allah (swt) is. But what else does He say? He says, here is this practice, fasting. If you can't do it for reasons of travel or illness, make it up. That's how important it is. What I want for you is ease; I don't want to make things difficult for you. But I am near to you, and you become aware of that if you make the effort.

Unfortunately, sometimes our ears hear that "Allah wants ease," so 'I' will supplement with what I considers ease for what Allah (swt) considers ease. Allah tells us that when you are traveling and ill you don't fast, BUT fast a certain number of days (unless you are chronically ill). So in a period of time when you are well, when your stomach is not bothering you, when your nose isn't bothering you, my teeth aren't bothering me, whatever it is; seize that day and fast for that day. Unless you want to walk around the earth like this: "I'm chronically ill. I'm chronically ill. I can't fast." Then what are you affirming? That you are a sick person. "O, Allah feel sorry for me. I'm so sick I can never fast. I can't do it. I'm too old. I'm 46. I'm 54. I'm 68. I have... whatever I have. I have diverticulitis, colitis, mastitis, pancreatic, prostatitis, inflamitis, digestitis, circulationitis, underarmitis, lipitis, toothitis... lazi-itis!"

Ramadan is serious business! It's not that you spend all day figuring out what your excuse is going to be for the whole year of why you can't fast. Or, "Allah lies! Allah is a liar, because He told you 'I want ease for you.'" Allah (swt) has more confidence in us than we have in ourselves, more faith in us than we have in ourselves, let alone [the faith we have] in Allah, more trust in our capacity than we have trust in ourselves. "I'm too busy-itis. I've got financial-itis... or bursitis: I can't hold the Qur'an. Flat-foot-itis.

Knee-itis” – like I have. Don’t-like-to-sit-in-a-chair-itis. Rather-not-pray-itis. And then I haven’t talked about the inflammations and all the ‘i-o-n’s – prostration, constipation, fearation, doubtation. You doubt that you have a life? You doubt that so many miracles have come to you? There are so many diseases are around us, so many bacteria, so many people dying in this world, so many difficulties people have that we can’t even conceive of. We only see it on the news because we have news-itis.

You don’t doubt that there have been a thousand miracles in your life already? Ask the people here who have had cancer. Ask the people who have seen. “Oh, the Shaykh is on his roll now! He wants us all to fast and then we’ll get real sick.... Oh, I got sick because I didn’t want to disappoint the Shaykh. I did it because I was supposed to!” This is not about supposed-tos. You can’t look at believe as a supposed to. Belief is part of our life, our heart. The question is do we believe in ourselves more than we believe in the One Who created us?

I’m facing days, this coming month, when I’m not going to be able to fast. It depends on which school of thought. If I’m Shafi, which I’m not, then anything, even an injection, means you can’t fast. If I’m Hanafi, well, I can probably fast on those days. Allah says, I want to make it easy for you, not I want to excuse you from everything that is responsible in life. I know some people make the case that the Muslims are crazy people, and maybe one of the reasons they are crazy is because they don’t eat for a whole month. But we do eat!. We don’t eat that much, necessarily. There are people in the Muslim world who sit up all night and eat, but at least they fasted all day. Oh, don’t write me a letter and say, “Oh Shaykh, I’m ashamed to ask whether I can fast or not.” It’s not about me. I’m just a messenger. I’m used to being shot at. You want to kill the Messenger? Go kill the Messenger. Here’s what the Prophet (sal) said, narrated by Salman Farsi the Persian (may Allah be pleased with him).

Salman Farsi said that the Messenger of Allah (sal) delivered a khutbah on the last day of Shaban. The Prophet (sal) said, “O you people! A great and blessed month has arrived for you. A month therein is a night that is better than one thousand months. The fasting during this month is an obligation, and the extra prayers during this night are voluntary. Anyone who comes closer to Allah through a good deed during this month is as if he performed an obligatory duty during times other than Ramadan. And he who fulfills an obligatory duty will be like one who fulfills seventy obligatory duties during another month. It is the month of patience, and the reward of patience is Paradise. It is a month of visiting the poor, the sick, the needy so as to share their sorrows.

It is the month wherein the nourishment, the sustenance, and the income of the believing Muslim increase, and they are blessed. Anyone who invites others to break their fast at *iftar* will be provided with forgiveness of his sins and be saved from hell, and will receive reward equal to the fasting person without reducing his own reward in any respect.” Some of the followers of the Prophet said, “Not all of us may find food to share with one so that he can break his fast.” The Prophet (sal) said, “Allah will reward you even if you help the fasting Muslim to break his fast with a date, a sip of water, or a drink of milk.”

It is a month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness, and the last part is freedom from hellfire. Anyone who helps a slave to be freed, Allah will forgive him and free him from hell. Increase in yourself four characteristics: two by which you will please your Lord, and two others which you cannot live without. The first two qualities to please Allah are to bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah, and to ask forgiveness from Allah. However, the other two things you cannot live

without are to ask Allah for Paradise and ask Him to protect you from the fire. Anyone who gives water to a Muslim at *iftar*, Allah will give him water during the Day of Judgment from the fountain of the Prophet Muhammed (sal) which will make him not feel thirsty until he enters Paradise.

That's what the Prophet (sal) said. Tell me, is there anything in there for a person who is ill on one or two or five of the days that you can't do? Can you perform a good deed? Can you be patient? Can you visit the poor? Can you help the sick and the needy? Can you invite someone to *iftar*? Can you give a date and a sip of water? Don't you see it's a mentality, too? "I can't fast! I can't fast!" There are so many aspects of fasting. Post this writing. Give it to everyone, in everyone's mailbox. If you don't put it up where you can see it and read it every day, pity on you.

Niyyat. Make a sincere intention that you want this Ramadan to be a sacred one and a special one. Make a plan. Anybody and everybody can make a plan. Plan how you would like to spend each day this Ramadan. Postpone things that can be postponed. Hear me. Focus on activities that will benefit you, Inshallah, in the hereafter. Set a target for how much Qur'an you will recite. Make a plan for when you will recite it. Set a target for how many prayers you will pray in the *masjid*. Make a plan for how you will reach that target. How will you get to the *masjid*? When? Change your ways. Make a *du'a* list. Make a list that includes the following: Your needs for this *dunya*; your needs for the Hereafter. The needs of your family members and friends, the names of your friends and family members. Serve. *Khidma*. Go beyond just yourself and your own needs during this month. Before Ramadan begins, find an avenue for community service, which we have, so you can serve others throughout the month. Don't we have an avenue for community service? Don't we have the sick and the needy? And of course, *sadaqa*. Figure out how you can spend less on yourself so you can spend more on the needy.

Begin calculating your assets so that when Ramadan begins, you are ready to pay your zakat and your sadaqa. We pray to Almighty Allah that we are blessed with a fruitful and beneficial Ramadan during which we will become closer to Allah (swt).

What else is there to say? I guess the question is whether you are inspired or you feel guilty. If you feel guilty, I think you should make an appointment with a psychiatrist. (Duas).

SECOND KHUTBAH O Allah, there are those among us who are not well. There are those among us who face illness. There are those among us who are recovering. There are those among us who, in the secret of their bodies, only you know what is transpiring. We ask You, Allah, for Your Shifat. We ask You for that because we want to serve You; we want to be better at our lives. We want to be better examples for others. We want to be those whom Your Mercy comes to, because of our calmness and our generosity and because of our love. We want to serve those who You have put before us, who need our service. O Allah, You have granted us the ability to serve many this summer. You have sent young people away from here with their hearts filled with hope. And we hope we put their lives and feet in a new direction. It caused difficulties at times; tiredness, anxieties and worries on the part of all of us, but again for the 33rd year, we have not only survived but put forward into this world young people who will hopefully serve You in a better way through whatever religion they belong to and path they follow. O Allah, we are most grateful for that. Please, extend this reward to us again and again. Help us to rejuvenate ourselves during Ramadan, instead of being worried about the fact that it comes in the heat of the day in the summer time.

O Allah, You have tested and tried so many of us this year, and You have a list of tests and trials somewhere else. We ask You to help us rise and meet them in faith and with trust in You. Allah, each one of us knows something that we need to do for ourselves. Each one of us knows that there is something in our mental, emotional, physical bodies

that we need to do for ourselves that we have not done, that we have put off. O Allah, have us just surrender and do that, and stop over-thinking things. O Allah, we know that You are the Help, the Light, the Truth. You are the Mercy, you are the Compassion. You are the Power and the Ability, and you are the creative force within us that allows us to advance on this path. O Allah (swt), help us put an eye on our tongue that we don't say the wrong thing. O Allah, put our hearts at rest. O Allah, if we are young, help us to be good as we age and as we gain maturity. If we are old, help us to be humble. And if we are somewhere in the middle, give us the time to make the changes we know we should make. *Amin.*