



[The Need to Perceive the Blessings Coming to Us](#)

The Challenge of Remembering Allah in the World of Today

Again, my brothers and sisters, *asalaam aleykum*. It is with a great deal of sincerity that I ask for peace upon you and we reflect upon what Allah (swt) has given us to reflect upon in the Qur'an. Allah says:

Those who believe in whose hearts are made tranquil in the remembrance of Allah, surely in the remembrance of Allah, the hearts find their tranquility.

And Allah (swt) also says, in a longer 'āyāt in Qur'an, which I will read it in English for the sake of time:

Lo, your religion is one religion and I am your Lord so keep your duty to Me. But, they, mankind have broken their religion into sects and each sect rejoicing in its tenets. So leave them in their error until the time. Think they that in their wealth and in their sons, wherewith We provide for them, We hasten onto them with good things? Nay but they perceive not. (23:52-56)

Well, today is the final farewell *khutbah* for the month of Ramadan, *alhamdulillah*. We begin our move to the celebration of 'Eid al-Fitr, and the beginning of Shawwal. Today, of course, is an extremely important day for us in our lives. Not only is it the *jumat*, but it is Friday and we know the importance of Friday. I just recited it again. A holy day, it is a sacred day, an important day. This particular Friday is a unique one, because it is in the month of Ramadan and it is in the final days of Ramadan. It

allows us to have a double blessing, then, at the doors of our *masjid*. Also, remember that the doors of hell are still closed, and the opportunities for us to reflect upon ourselves and to receive the blessings of Allah (swt) remain with us even stronger.

Each one of us are like those spoken about in the Qur'an who see but don't see and we don't realize, often, the great blessings that come to us. Friday is important in that the doors of Paradise are open. But I venture to say that none of us feels quite ready or qualified, or have reached the status of those who have guaranteed their place in Paradise. In this blessed month of Ramadan, we have studied about, we have talked about, we've experienced many things, and we begin to think about our friend Ramadan leaving. As you know, on Sunday, we are going to have a farewell party. It is the month that is most dear to us, and every sincere Muslim, will only return after the year has turned one revolution. We understand that for some it does not come back. So we have to think that we may not have the opportunity to fast again. We have to think and reflect on how well we have done this year. We don't want to lose any of the blessings of this month, [which come] for those who worship Allah with sincerity.

Allah is always with us, and though the Ramadan leaves us with all its blessings and rewards, hopefully the blessings and rewards remain. We hope and we pray that we continue to have them, and that responsibilities lies within our own self, which is our ability to fulfill our duties, our responsibilities, our intentions. One thing we can speak on and reflect on for the next couple of days is our commitment, and our responsibility, and our loyalty to Allah (swt). Many of you know that what I mean by that is not loyalty to some distant God, but loyalty to the principles, the values, the attributes, and the characteristics with which Allah has revealed Himself to us, which exist within us and around us.

Though this month has passed, we cannot leave it. We can fast six days in the month of Shawwal. Some may have time to make up in the coming month. But we know that whoever fasts in Shawwal after fasting the month of Ramadan is rewarded with rewards equivalent to a year's fast. It was reported by the Prophet (sal) that ***"Whosoever fasts Ramadan and then follows it with six days of fasting during Shawwal, will attain fasting equivalent to a year."*** Well, that is a great promise. Why do you think that is? Maybe, it is because it is harder to do. Maybe, it is because we get to choose the days. Maybe, because it is easy to forget right off the bat when we leave Ramadan. But in the last few days of Ramadan, we have to put our house in order, and we have to complete the recitation of Qur'an, and we have to increase and magnify our kindness and generosity to others. We pay the general *zakat* of the past year, but we have also, in this community, and I hope everyone paid, the *zakat al-fitr*.

We have to try our best to observe and find what the Laylatul Qadr is or was, which we have all been trying to do with small groups of people in *itikāf* here in the mosque, or in our homes. Though I wish there were more looking out for it, so they could warn those of us who might have missed it, perhaps the blessing of the Laylatul Qadr has descended upon your heart and your souls. On the Eid, we have the opportunity to distribute our gifts to one another. Some people have made *itikāf* and are continuing to do that. On the 'Eid we have the opportunity to visit our friends up the hill in the cemetery. Some prefer to go a step further by making *dhikru-Llāh* and *tasbih* on a regular basis throughout month.

We need to prepare our hearts to enjoy the celebration that comes with the passing of this month. And even there are some who pray that they can celebrate by leaving, this planet in Ramadan, if they are ill. We always say that if someone passes in the month of Ramada, *alhamdulillah*, what a great blessing it is, just as we say what a

great blessing it is to be born in the month of Ramadan. But fasting, and reading Qur'an, and contemplation of this month really has to be accompanied by some other thoughts. One of which is the importance of remembering Allah. We are living at an incredible age. In the age we find ourselves in, I cannot come to the *minbar* and repeat what I heard just yesterday on the news, because most of it wouldn't be fit for your ears to hear, if we went into detail about the miseries and sufferings in the world today. The technology we have is a very hungry technology. It consumes tremendous amounts of information and regurgitates it to us 24 /7. Then there are the constant lies, and misrepresentations, and fear-mongering that goes on. It defines the way people relate to the world.

What we are asked to remember, out of all of this, are fairly innocuous bits of information, sound bites that are repeated over and over again, until the human being is so dumbed-down and brainwashed that we lose our attachment to the truth, and our concern with what is real leaves us. We have to hold really fast. On the other hand, we have achieved with the technology that is so far beyond what many people would even consider a possibility 10, 15, 20 years ago. We are in a strange *barzakh* between a repetitive kind of boredom, and this incredible capacity to reach into the far reaches of space, time, information, and data to draw conclusions, make projections, and create interdependencies of diverse systems and groups of individuals in this world.

We see up close the horrors and terrors, and sometimes feel incapable of reaching out to people, when people can be reached out to, like the people in Iran today. But the government is not reaching out to the victims of the earthquake. We find it incomprehensible for human beings not to reach out to other human beings. The collapse of the Greek economy has a profound effect. The questions being raised about the future have profound influences. These are all forces that are acting on us

socially and politically, more so than in the past because of our technology. We have conquered the seas and space, and have an opportunity on Mars right now. We have improved our lives in certain ways, but we see people suffer more, in our own country and around the world.

We read about new therapies and replacement parts and diets, and the end of cancer and many things like that, but we find that even among us, cancer still pops up its ugly head. People are still caught in decision-making, not knowing exactly which way to turn. There is an opportunity here and an opportunity there. Because of technology, we now know about a Dr. Bazinski in Texas, or Dr. Block in Chicago that we didn't know about before. Still, the same human decisions have to be made. Perhaps we have neglected our relationship with Allah so much that we forget how to relate to those challenges that are before us, how to look at the world that is in the situation it is in.

If we have lost something of our relationship with Allah Swt, then we have lost the thing that is most important: our ability to find peace of mind, peace of heart, our ability to understand the purpose of life. We do live in this very material *dunya*, and no matter how advanced it is, we have slipped back spiritually. Perhaps, we are slipping back spiritually faster than we are moving forward spiritually, even perhaps faster than we are moving forward technologically. I know that from the time I left my office today to the time I get back, the technology will have improved and changed. There is a terrible disease going around, and it's not Ebola and not cancer. It's not just the recurrence of whooping cough. It is the loss of peace of mind, and the loss of the possibilities of simplicity, the joy of tranquility, the love of care and concern for other human beings.

The only way we can really deal with this is to remember who and where we are, and remember that those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah without a doubt, in remembrance of Allah do hearts find their tranquility and satisfaction. We have to think about remembering Allah, and make our life an example of that remembrance, glorifying Allah morning and evening, as we are told in Qur'an. What does it mean to have such belief? What does it mean to be a trustworthy believer? I do ask you to contemplate remembrance of Allah in light of the world we live in, and where humanity is going, and could go, and maybe where humanity has arrived at today. I'm not so sure that we are uncomfortable living in hell; most of us do pretty well there. Or at least, maybe, we live in the suburbs of hell in this world.

The worst of our characteristics and weaknesses are brought out in the guise of being the best. In the name of peace, of democracy, of truth, honesty, of the constitution or the Declaration, of our fathers / forefathers, in the name of cultures and traditions, in the name of people, things are said, looked at, and done, which never need to be said, never should be looked at again, and never ever should be done. It happens before our very eyes. Unfortunately, all you have to do is turn on the news, flip the channels, and listen to one lie after another lie after another. If you happen to run across the truth, you see how sandwiched it is between the lies. I think that this is the result of a very passive society who has abandoned its responsibilities over the years, allowing others to think and speak for them without expressing their views.

Of course, this is the social realm, not the spiritual realm. Why am I speaking about this at a *khutbah*? But no, it's not. Those who remember Allah Swt remember justice, and truth, and love, tolerance, patience, and understanding. They are willing to put up their lives for that, and I don't mean in battle or war. I mean the courage it

takes to stand up and speak. The spiritual analog is to be aware and knowledgeable about Allah's creation and to remember Allah Swt, not to be narrow-minded, or intolerant, impatient or condemning, but rather to move ever so diligently and sincerely, ever so carefully, humbly, toward higher goals and deeper understandings, with a great deal of compassion, forgiveness, and repentance in our hearts. I don't think it's inappropriate to quote what is attributed to the Prophet Isa (as) when he said, *"Let those who are without sin cast the first stone."*

Inshā'a-Llāh, we all look towards ourselves in the next few days in remembrance of Allah, and look towards society and the community we live in, and really double our efforts to ask who and where we are. Let us see if we can come to some good conclusions about that by the end of Ramadan and the beginning of Shawwal. Let's make *du'ā*.

SECOND KHUTBAH. I am very grateful to Allah for giving us this time over the weekend, for the upcoming Ramadan Retreat. I want to thank all of you who have spent not only this Ramadan in sincere meditation, but also for those of you who have spent so much time with those in need in this community, in the hospitals and in their homes. May Allah reward you *alf, alf* for your efforts. And for those of you who are in need yourselves, we ask Allah to send you His special blessings on these days and in the year to come. Please know that whatever effort you have made will only be returned to you thousands of times. Whatever tiredness you have acquired has just below its surface a tremendous amount of love and balance. All you need to do is try to stay balanced with your own life as best as you can. Have your refuge in Allah Swt and in Rasūlu-Llāh (sal), and in the strength of this community of people. Thank you very much personally from me, and I ask you to keep sustaining, because only Allah Swt knows what the future is. Those who give today are the recipients tomorrow. (Duas).

