

September 11, 2009

Khutbah

Title: [The Two Groups of People](#)

DVD title: To Whom are the Doors of Paradise Open or Closed:
Two Groups of People

Opening du'ās. *Asalaamu aleikum.* Our Lord and blessed Prophet (sal), and all of our *shuyukh* over the centuries and eons have reminded us that there are special times of devotion and inspiration in our lives. Those special times are occasions for us to remember what we forgot, to be attentive to what we have been distracted from, to be alert to what we have ignored, and to affirm that which we have forgotten to affirm on a regular basis.

These special times are times of great bāraka/blessing, which Allah (swt) has enjoined us to “stock up on” and make provision for. Allah (swt) reveals in the Holy Qur'an, in the ‘āyat where he is talking about *hajj*,

**Whatever good you do, Allah knows. Supply yourself with provision,
but truly the best provision is safeguarding yourself for Allah.
Safeguard yourself for me, O you people of insight. (2:197)**

This is the provision that Allah (swt) has asked us to safeguard. This month of Ramadān comes to us as I always say, as an honored guest, a friend. It's our duty to be hospitable, humble, respectful. It's our duty to serve this guest. Our fasting in Ramadān will be a *shifāt*, a healing for us. It will be an intercessor for us on the Day of Awakening. The Muslims who came before us called Ramadān: The Atazkiya/Purifier. They used to ask Allah (swt) to extend their lives to be able to witness another Ramadān, due to the amount

of blessings that come from Ramadān. So we should take a moment now, as we come into the last ten days of Ramadān, to ask Allah in our hearts to extend our lives so that we may experience another Ramadān.

With the last week of Ramadān at our doorstep, some people would ask themselves, “Will I be written in the book of those who will be free from the fire of Hell, or will I be among those whose only reward was to remain hungry and thirsty?” To answer that question, there are two groups of people in Ramadan. The first group takes full advantage of the special occasion, the Divine blessing for all Muslims. The doors of Heaven are open to this group, and the doors of Hell are closed. The caller from the heavens says to us, **“O you who want to do good deeds! March on, this is the month of sabr (patience). And fasting is half of patience.”** The Qur'an says that the reward for patience is Paradise. Patience means whatever Allah has given you during Ramadān. Maybe Allah has given you hell. Maybe Allah has given you sickness. Maybe Allah has given you distraction, or forced you to travel, or put you in one spot. Maybe Allah has made you weak, or strong. How you find yourself in the month of Ramadān is the month of patience—not fasting
—patience.

It is the month of perseverance—not of not drinking, not of not smoking, not of not indulging in other pleasures, not of not eating. It is the month of patience. The people who understand this are fasting the month of Ramadān. Allah (swt) says in different verses of Qur'an that the reward for patience is Jannah/Paradise. What is Paradise? Is it a place: go out 714, turn right, go 275, 000 miles; turn left, then go another 150 million miles, jump over 14 moons, and then you're in paradise? Paradise is qualities: peace, justice, kindness, love, understanding, harmony, balance, resonance, freedom from our distractions, sins, and fears, freedom from our doubts. This is Jannah.

If you were to paint it, it would look like rivers of gold and of milk. If you could smell it, it would smell like the best perfume. If you could taste it, it would taste like the best food. Isn't that how things are when you love things? I remember a personal story. My father and mother eloped. Then he took her back to her house, and he went back to his house. He sat down and ate breakfast. He ate something he never ate for breakfast. My grandfather looked at him and said, "Okay, Nat. What happened? Did you and Fran get married last night?" "How'd you know?" "Because you never eat that. You hate that!" Then my grandfather told him that he should go now and be with his wife. That's a true story.

"Inallaha ma'a saberīn." He assists the patient. And Allah loves the patient: **Inallaha yuhibūn saberīn.** The one who is patient has the reward of no limitations. They have cleansed their soul, their bodies, and their minds. So they will not be doing bad things with no limitations, only good things. What does it take for that? A lot of Ramadāns. So you pray today to live for another Ramadān. It also means there is no limit in the reward from Allah. This is the month of love. This is the month of compassion. This is the month of giving. This group of Muslims has an open heart. Such people have a soft tongue and speech. They treat people with respect and dignity. They stay away from quarreling and fighting. They speak the truth. This group of Muslims is protected from the wrong behavior of their friends, their associates, their colleagues, their relatives, and their spouses. This group tries to elevate themselves to the level of the world of the *malakūt*, the angels. And our human soul has a Divine secret within its creation in *sirr*:

Allah says in Qur'an, "**When I fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him from the created soul.**" (38:72) Our breath is the breath of Allah. On our human side—the temptations, the desires, the fears—sometimes they overcome our spiritual soul. The occasions of fasting will elevate our soul to the level of angels; and will give us

strength to be obedient, as the angels are; and will have our spirit floating and getting close to our Creator, circling the throne. Allah (swt) says in a *hadith quds*: “*All deeds of the sons of Adam belong to them. The good deed could be rewarded anywhere between 10 and 700 times, except for fasting. Fasting is for Me, and I will reward it.*”

The second group of people are those who don’t take advantage of fasting. All their reward was a hard time with hunger and thirst. They break their fast with their eyes, say words they should not have said, and they do deeds they knew better not to do. The Prophet (sal) says, “*The person who does not quit false statements and lying during Ramadan, there is no need for him to quit his food and drink.*” From this group we find disrespect, and disrespect of Ramadān. They make no distinction between Ramadān and other months. This group of people denies the sanctity and holiness of Ramadān. They will be in for a heavy problem on the Day of Awakening.

Of course, we all make mistakes... on maybe one day or two days: “I forgot and tasted the food! I’m going to hell!” “Oh, I said a bad thing and forgot to say I’m sorry. I’m going to hell!” “Oh, I did something I shouldn’t have done. I’m going to hell!” No. Allah is rewarding. Allah tells us, warns us, and forgives us. We repent and we are forgiven. No one is perfect. No one who does a “perfect” fast is perfect, because the good intention has to be there, also. There are plenty of disciplined people who don’t eat, don’t drink, don’t taste, don’t smoke, don’t do this and that, keep their mouths shut; but – in their hearts there might be penury. This second group of people have the wrong intention.

Here we are in the last ten days of Ramadān, and we should have a certain attitude so that we can be among the... first group or second group? This is a test! First group. We have to sincerely perform our fast *fī sabīli-Llāh..* The Prophet (sal) said, “*Whoever fasts*

during Ramadan faithfully and fearing Allah, his (includes her too) *sins will all be forgiven.*" We have to continue our recitation of Qur'an, and our prayers in the *masjid*. We have to increase our prosperity, our "savings" account for the Day of Awakening with good deeds, whether it's charity or visiting the sick or visiting the poor, or feeding the hungry. We have the *zakat al fitr*, which was collected yesterday. That's obligatory, and we have to pay it before the end of Ramadān. You will take it to the poor people and feed the hungry for all of us. *Alhamduli-Llāh*, may Allah reward you for it.

If some of us have debt to another Muslim person, or debt that is due, we must pay it this month. The fiscal year for this year is Ramadān, just like our World Community and Legacy fiscal year is the end of September. Pay your debt. All of the fasting will be accepted; but if you owe someone, and the debt remains unpaid, you will be asked about it on the Day of Judgment. Let us return back to Allah in repentance, asking for forgiveness, hopeful for the mercy of Allah. This is what we pray at the beginning of the *khutbah*. This is a special occasion for mercy, for forgiveness, for freedom from the fire. Let us say the same words our Father Adam (as) and our Mother Hawa (as) said, *inshā'a-Llāh*.

O Lord, we have transgressed against ourselves and if you do not forgive us, and have mercy on us, we will be among those who are lost.

(7:23)

Finally, let us seek the Laylatul Qadr, the Night of Power. This night that is better than a thousand months. During this night, Allah descends close to His servants and asks, "Who will make *du'ā* so I can respond to them? Who will ask Me so I can give to them? Who will ask My Forgiveness, so I can forgive them? Who will come toward Me, so I can run toward them? Who will seek My Mercy, so I can be merciful? Who will seek My

Compassion, so I can be compassionate toward them? ” During the night of Laylatul Qadr many provisions, many bounties, many blessings, and much *nai’ma* (grace) comes to humanity. Whoever witnesses that night, and spends it in prayer and supplication will have his sins forgiven. The big loser is the one who misses on this big, blessed occasion.

Aisha (ra) asked the Prophet (sal) about *du’ā* during the Night of Qadr, and he said, “***O Allah! You are the most forgiving. You like to grant forgiveness, please grant us forgiveness.***” So we ask Allah (swt) to let us exit the month of Ramadān with our sins forgiven, to grant us mercy, forgiveness and freedom from the hellfire. We ask Allah to give us the strength, to be active on the Laylatul Qadr, to be faithful and fearful and pious during that night. We ask Allah to accept our fasting, our prayers, and our recitation of Qur'an. We ask Allah to be granted heaven and freedom from the fire. O Allah, You are the most forgiving. You love to grant forgiveness, please grant forgiveness to all of the Muslims. Please embrace us in the dynamic beauty and reality of your Divine Presence, and shower us with your blessings. *Amin.*

SECOND KHUTBAH Du’ās.