

May 24, 2010

Monday dars in Masjid



Title: [The Meaning of the Month of Rajab](#)

The Sacred Month of Rajab: Preparing for Ramadan

Allah (swt) tells us in the Qur'an:

The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve months, and they are already inscribed in the Book of Allah on that day when He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are considered sacred, and that is the true *dīn*, the right religion. And do not wrong yourselves in them and wage all out war on those who attribute partners, just as they are waging all out war on you. Know that Allah is with those who are truly devoted to His servants.”
(9:36)

This ‘*āyat* has been misunderstood many, many times by people. This is a war to be waged against one’s own *nafs*, against the *wiswisu*, the whispering of Shaytan. On the occasion of the revelation to the believers, the very minimum a person can do can lift one to the highest sights of Jannah. The *mu’minūn* had traveled from Medina to meet the people of Mecca before the city was won by Allah’s (swt) Messenger, Prophet Muhammed (sal). There are many stories that go around this month, but I think it is very important to understand that here we are at Rajab. When we look closely at what has been revealed in this month, and the things that transpire in Rajab, like Isra Miraj for example, the way we express the *dīn* in our lives is very important.

We should wake up every morning in these months coming up to Ramadan, and look at the calendar, and remember this is the month we are in. We have to pay very good

attention to our *adab* during this month. We have to pay very good attention to our *ibāda* in this month. The way in which we understand these months that are coming is very important to our private lives. Of course there are obvious things. We should really watch what we say. We should try not to do anything that is forbidden. We should try to do everything that is right. We should try to do everything properly by taking the time to do things properly. We shouldn't rush through even the simplest things like *wudu*. We should not rush through our prayers, except we should rush to the *masjid* to pray, or to our prayer carpet, wherever it may be. Even there is the saying, “*Be careful to observe your prayers, especially the middle prayer.*”

This is very important to us at this time. Many of us cannot stay very discipline throughout the whole year. Many distractions come to us. We live in a society where we are not reminded by the *muezzin* what time it is. We are not seeing the people of Islam every day. We are not remembering. It's easy to be distracted, so it's incumbent upon us to remind one another and ourselves. There are times when we have to be especially aware of things, and this is a time. There are momentous moments in our lives, and this is a momentous moment in these months.

When Allah (swt) refers to the Meccans, He refers to what is happening. This reference is used by people who don't like Islam. They say, “Look, they are talking about waging war against everyone, against all the non-believers.” What is a non-believer? It is a person who has no belief. Who has no sense of a higher power. We are distracted every day, and there are moments when each one of us is not the best believers. I do not want to say that we are *kafirs*; but we are not the best of believers. [It is not] just to believe in form, not just to believe in ritual, but to believe in the essence of Islam, of service to Allah, of kindness, compassion, mercy; of understanding, patience, tolerance, perseverance and love. These are the things. We have to wage war against all those things inside of us—in the *jihad al-akbar*—all those things inside of us that will distract us.

Gafla is a terrible thing. You wake up one day, and you are fifty years old. You wake up the next day, and you are seventy. It's like only a day has passed. *Wa'alahi*, it is spring again and you are planting the garden again. It's like yesterday when you planted the garden. Time goes very fast, and time goes very slow. We have to remember that these months are a great opportunity, if for no other reason than there are over a billion people who are remembering it this month. You know it is very important to have support. Think about it: if you miss days in Ramadan, for whatever reason, it's very much harder to make up those days than it is to fast those days. Because in fasting those days, you have the support of everyone around you. "I'm going to fast on Tuesday. Oh, but I have a meeting on Tuesday, so I'm not going to fast then. I'll fast on Thursday." All these excuses come running into the mind.

When Allah says that during Ramadan the doors of hell are locked, it means also in our minds. In the month of Ramadan, the mind is open, and fasting becomes easy sometimes—too easy. Then you see the opposite side of it. So here we are, building up to that moment, to the time when we should spend so much attention this month and next month. We should be pious every day and care every day, and be careful every day. The word itself, *rajab*, linguistically in Arabic is a derivative noun. The meaning can be deduced from the fact that this trilateral root from which it derives contains certain ideas within it. Two, really: one idea with two additives. It implies honor and veneration. In the speech of the Bedouwi, the noun *tajib* is synonymous with *tazin*, to manifest, to magnify, to glorify, to honor, to venerate. The corresponding active aspect of this expression is: I have venerated the month of Rajab. When you look even more deeply into it, you see more.

Rajib comes from the saying uttered on the day of the argument in the roofed passage known as the Portico of the Banī Sā'ida, on the day the Messenger (sal) was taken from this world. The Immigrants and the Ansar were in dispute over who would be appointed

as a leader. (A very tender subject at times, depending on who you are talking to). The story is widely known that al-Hubāb became so angry that he drew his sword and cried, “I am the much-loved little rubbing post, their palm tree loaded with fruit!” This is a way of saying that he is the mighty one among the people, the one who commands obedience. The date palm is held in great respect. People take care to prop it up when it is bent too far one side to another. These terms are very important: *rujba* is applied to the structure that is built around the tree to hold it up. The “much-rubbed little rubbing post” refers to the trunk of the tall tree, which many camels like to rub themselves against to stop itching. The Bedouwi used to put up posts so the little camels could rub themselves against them.

It was in this month that the Arabs got into the habit of propping up the fruit-laden trees to prevent the branches from breaking, if the winds should come across the desert. So it is said, “I have honored the date palm by propping it up.” There are some who believe it also refers to a net of thorns that was placed around the tree to keep the animals from eating the dates. For our purpose, it is a sort of repetitive process to get people ready, in constant remembrance and glorification of Allah, because the angels raise their voices in the month of Rajab. They extol the majesty and glory of Allah in this month, praising Him and proclaiming His Holiness.

We should also note that during this time it is sometimes called the month of Rajam, because it signifies the month in which Shaytan is pelted with the shooting stars from heaven, so they can't cause any harm to the *mu'minūn* during that period of time. Some also say that the *rā* refers to the Rahmat of Allah. Every letter has a meaning. The *jīm* stands for the generosity of Allah, and the *bā* stands for the beneficent kindness of Allah (swt). These gifts come in this month. It is a name, but there is meaning in the name. We have to give meaning to it in our life. It's not just about what people think, or just another month. It's a time where we are preparing for the fruit of Ramadan that becomes ripe in those days. We have to protect the fruit now. We have to set this barrier up against

which the camels can scratch themselves, and the other animals will stay away. That will prop up the tree, which is our self, and the fruit will come to us in the month of Ramadan, *inshā'a-Llāh*. So I think this is sort of a nice way to remember the importance of this month.

We should try to extend the month. How? By doing a lot of *dhikr*, by coming to the *masjid* and doing your prayer, by reading Qur'an, by sleeping less and doing more *muraqabah* in your days while you are walking. I took Grandma home and she told me, "When I walk in the morning, I do 100 *La haula wa la quwwta illah billahi*. I pray for my parents, and I do 100 *salawat* for them." I asked, "What *salawat*?" She said, "*Salaallahu alehe wa salām, Ya Muhammed*." She gets up at 3:30 in the morning. I'm up, sitting in meditation or reading Qur'an, so I see her light go on. I said, "What are you doing? Prayer is not for two hours." She's making two *rak'as* for her parents, for her sister who passed. Then she's making *du'ā* and supplication, some *salawat* and reading Qur'an. Then she prays and does her exercises, takes her breakfast, and goes for a walk, where she is doing all this *du'ā*.

Now, are you are little embarrassed? I am. I am ashamed by my mother-in-law. Twenty years I have known her, and she does it every day. *Alhamdulillah-Llāh*. If I say we should take these three months to prepare for Ramadan, what about the other nine months? She's doing it all the time. We need to just go deeper and deeper. This year you can tell yourself, "This year I'm really going to go deeper. I'm not going to do things that are prohibited during this month. I'm going to interpret things in the best of ways." I think that there is a lot we can do, so *inshā'a-Llāh*, we can prepare for this month. I think that, *inshā'a-Llāh*, we should all make a better effort this year to be open-hearted, open-minded, kind to everyone.

This is what Rajab is: to get our beliefs firmly grounded, to relieve our itching. If you are itching, you have the month of Rajab. Why not pray two extra *rak'as* every night? That

means you'll pray 60 extra *rak'as* during the month. That's not much. Recite Suratu-l-Fatihah one time, Suratu-l-Kafirūn, and Suratu-l-Ikhlās. Then recite after the *salām*, (*du'ā* in Arabic). Why not do that? Just make a little extra effort. This is not just for a ritual; it is just to remember, *inshā'a-LLāh. Asalaamu aleikum.*