

August 6, 2010

Khutbah



Title: [The Coming of the Blessed Month of Ramadān](#)

DVD title: Preparing for Ramadan:
Hadith Inspirations and Admonitions

(Opening duas) My dear brothers and sisters, in the Holy Qur'an, Allah reveals to us:

And from them there are those who say, Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the final world, and shield us from the suffering of the fire.

(Sura Baqarah)

And also in Suratu-l-Imran,

Our Lord! Do not cause our hearts to deviate after You have guided them, and give mercy from Your Presence. Surely, You are the Giver of gifts.

Today, as we come very near to the onset of Ramadan (this is the last of the *khutbahs* in Sha'ban), we have the opportunity to recall what the Prophet (sal) said during this time. As I quoted from the Qur'an, you understand that these prayers and these '*āyāt*, and all of the pleas and supplications to Allah (swt) come to fruition, *inshā'a-Llāh*, in the Holy Month of Ramadān. *Inshā'a-Llāh*, we enter Ramadān with that in our minds. As we prepare for Ramadān in the coming days, I ask you, enjoin you and plead with you, and with myself, to keep all these things in mind.

There is no greater blessing than the month of Ramadān and all that comes with it. Ramadān comes to help prepare us for a deeper understanding of the role that we play in life and in the Hereafter, and how much Allah (swt) is present in our life and in our own selves. All the signs around us are manifestations of the Light of Allah (swt), including

ourselves. The virtues of Ramadān are seen in many different ways in different traditions and cultures. In a collection of Hadith, prepared by both the Ahl al Bayt and other collectors of Hadith, there are so many traditions that are worth repeating. They give us, more than anything, not something we should think of as an exact replication, but inspiration. They give us how to prepare ourselves for Ramadān through the words of the Prophet Muhammed (sal).

It has been told that during the last days of Sha'ban, the Prophet (sal) addressed us. He said, "O people! There comes upon you now a great month, a most blessed month in which lies a night that is greater in worth than one thousand months. It is a month that God has made compulsory, in which the prescribed fasting is observed by day. He has made a special prayer, tarawīh, which is a tradition at night. Whomsoever draws near to Allah by performing any virtuous deeds in this month, for him or her shall be rewards as if he or she has performed a prescribed act of worship at any other time of year. And whoever performs a prescribed act of worship for Allah, for him or her shall be the reward of seventy prescribed acts of worship at any other time of year.

This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for true patience is Paradise. It is a month of sympathy for one's fellow human beings. It is a month in which true believers' provisions are increased. Whosoever feeds a person, performing the prescribed fast in order to end the fast at sunset, for him or her there should be forgiveness of all their sins, and the emancipation from the hellfire. For him or her shall be the same reward as for those whom he or she has fed, without that person's reward being diminished in the least."

Thereupon we said, "O Messenger of God! Not all of us possess the means whereby we can provide enough for a fasting person to break the prescribed fast!" And the Messenger (peace be upon him) replied, "Allah provides the

same reward to one who gives a person performing the prescribed fast a single date, a drink of water, or a sip of milk to end their fast.” This is the month. The first part brings Allah’s mercy. The middle of it brings Allah’s forgiveness, and the last brings emancipation from the hellfire. Whomsoever lessens the burdens of Allah’s servants in this month, Allah will forgive that person and free them from the fire.

He also said (peace and blessings be upon him), “In this month there are four things you should endeavor to perform in great number, two of which are to please your Lord, and the other two are those without which you cannot make do. Those which shall please your Lord are those which you should do in great quantity: recite the testimony bearing witness to the oneness of Allah, ash-hadu an lā ‘ilaha wa-ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Rasūlullāh, and beg Allah for forgiveness for your wrong doings. As for those which without you cannot make do, you should beg Allah (swt) for entering Paradise and seek refuge in Allah (swt). Whoever gives water to drink to a person who has performed the prescribed fast, Allah should grant him a drink from my fountain—such a drink that he/she will never feel thirsty again when he/she enter Paradise.”

These are things we should remember. These are inspirations. These are admonitions. But they are not rules that if you don’t follow them, something terrible will happen to you. What will happen that is terrible will be by your own choices in life. These are inspirations, admonitions that we should think about and remember during the month.

The Messenger of Allah (sal) is quoted as saying, “**Allah (swt) has charged a group of His Angels with the task of supplicating for those who observe the fast.**” On the very same page, Imam al Jafar (ra) is quoted as saying, “*If a person fasts during a hot day and he suffers from thirst, Allah will assign a thousand angels to wipe his face and convey to him glad tidings. And when he breaks his fast, Allah (swt) addresses him with these*

words, 'How sweet you smell and soul are! O My Angels, bear witness that I have forgiven him.'"

On page 96 of the Thawab al-Malik, and also in other pages in that book, Sidna Malik quotes Sayed Ibn Jubayr as saying,

I asked Ibn Abbas (ra) once about the rewards of someone who fasts during the month of Ramadan, knowing its greatness. He said, O Ibn Jubayr! Get ready to listen to what your ears have never heard before, nor your heart has ever experienced, nor your soul has ever reckoned regarding that about which you have inquired. What you are seeking is the knowledge of the first generations and of the last. So, I left him and prepared myself to meet again. I returned to him early at daybreak. Having said the Fajr prayers together, I reminded him of the tradition which I had sought. So he turned his face to me and said the following:

Listen carefully to what I'm going to tell you. I have heard the Messenger of Allah (sal) saying, "Had you ever come to know about your rewards during Ramadān, you would surely have thanked the Almighty a great deal more than you usually do. When the first night is over, Allah (swt) the Exalted One forgives the sins committed by all members of my nation, the ones committed in secrecy and the ones committed in public. And He elevates your state 2000 degrees and builds you 50 towns in paradise. On the next day, He rewards you for every step you take during that day with the rewards of one who adored Him for a full year, and the reward of one of His Prophets. He will reward you as though you had performed the fast for a whole full year. On the third day, the Exalted, the Dear One, grants you a dome in Paradise for each hair on your body, a dome with white pearl on top, at the bottom of which are 12,000 houses. In each one are 1,000 beds, and on each bed is a nymph with large lovely eyes, each served by a thousand servants. The head covering of each of them is better than this world and everything in it."

So, I think we should at least get through the first four days. Don't you?

On the fifth day, He builds you in paradise a million cities (with public transportation, I might add. No cars.) In each one are 70,000 houses. In each one are 70,000 tables, and on each table there are 70,000 bowls. In each bowl there are 60,000 types of food (meat included) each of which is different than the other. On the sixth day, He will grant you the abode of peace, a hundred thousand towns in each one. In each one are a hundred thousand rooms, and in each one there are a hundred thousand beds of gold, the length of each a hundred thousand yards, and on each bed are..... etc. etc.

A hundred thousand wives, a hundred thousand husbands – could you bear that? And each with a hundred thousand locks of hair braided with pearls and sapphires, etc. Never mind. Now, you can sit and take it literally – that's wonderful. Or you can understand how inspiring it is, how much beauty awaits us. How can we tell what the beauty is if we've never seen it? We can only tell from things we've seen. If I could – which I can't – describe to you the beauty of Paradise in the language of Paradise, none of us would understand it, because we don't speak it. It has to be described to us in the language we understand, through things we have seen with our own eyes. We have seen cities; we've seen beautiful people; we've seen beautiful food. We've seen tables prepared for people we love. He goes on to say,

And on the seventh day the Almighty grants you in the garden of bliss the rewards of 40,000 martyrs and 40,000 sidiqs. On the eighth day, Allah grants you the rewards of good deeds on the Day of Resurrection, ten on your right, ten on your left, ten before you and ten behind you. On the 16th day, Allah the Almighty grants you sixty outfits to wear as soon as you have been in your grave, etc. etc.

All things we can relate to. All things we can understand. You go to Macy's and see a beautiful skirt you can wear, or some beautiful clothing. You say, "This is beautiful.

How does this look on me? Do you think this will be good for the wedding?” “Yes, it will be wonderful for the wedding. You will be the most beautiful one there.” These are ways we are told of the blessings and beauty and greatness of Allah, things you can’t imagine, in language you can’t speak. Just like the language that was spoken by Hazrat Adam and Hazrati Hawa (as) before they fell from the state of perfect grace. Do you know the language? I’ll tell you what I think it was: was it Spanish? Was it Farsi? No. Was it Arabic? No. Was it Hindi? Was it English? Definitely not. What was it? It was the language of *du’ā*, constantly supplicating and praising Allah. It goes on.

“*And he will send you a cloud to protect you from the heat of the day.*” Is that important to someone who lives in the desert? Yes. But this is also meant for someone who lives at the North Pole. It is very important as well, as there is no heat in the day. These are things people can relate to. These are Arabs living in the desert. They can relate to this.

On the seventeenth day Almighty Allah says, I have forgiven them and their parents, and exempted them from having to undergo hardships on the Day of Resurrection. On the eighteenth day the Exalted One orders Mikail (as) and Israfil, as well as the angels who bear the ‘Arsh and all the archangels to seek forgiveness for the nation of Muhammed (sal) until the next year, and He will grant you on the Day of Resurrection whatever rewards He grants those who participated in the battle of Badr. On the nineteenth day, all angels on heaven and earth have already sought permission from your Lord to visit your graves, and to bring you every day a present and to drink as long as you remain in the barzakh.

So if you complete your fast for 24 days, Allah (swt) sends 70,000 angels to protect you from the accursed Shaytan, and will grant you each for the days of your fast as though you have fasted for a hundred years, and will set a ditch between you and hell.

Time and space are all obliterated. Just like when you go to sleep at night, where is the time and space? You are not thinking, “I’m sleeping. I’m sleeping. Now, it’s time to get up.” It’s obliterated. It’s like baby *barzakh*. These are ways in which we can understand, in which we can relate to the bounties, the greatness of the month of Ramadān. And then he goes through all the thirty days. If you would like a copy of these, I will make it available to you, just so you can read it during the month of Ramadān. “What’s happening today? Ah, 70,000 angels. I better clean the house. 70,000 angels are coming.” And he ends, *“O Jubayr! This is the month of Ramadan. Whoever fasts during this dya and spends a portion of the night saying prayers, abstaining from eating and anything unlawful, safeguarding his or her modesty against anything unlawful, and withholding his or her tongue against saying anything unlawful will leave his or her sins behind as the month leaves.”*

These are the wonderful things we will get, but I think the greatest is the removal of the sins and the temptation. *Jubayr (ra) said, “O Messenger of Allah! What a beautiful hadith this is. And the Messenger of Allah said, “And what difficult terms there are.”* The Prophet (sal) is also quoted as saying, *“Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan out of a firm belief and desire to please Allah will have all past and future sins forgiven.”*

This month of Ramadān is coming, just like a friend comes to visit. When you know a friend is coming to visit, you prepare. You say, “What am I going to cook? My good friend is coming. What is the house going to look like? What should I do? I will have some really good discussion with my friend Ramadān who is coming. We will sit all night, drink coffee and tea, and we are not going to sleep at all until Fajr is over. I will have all these great discussions with my friend Ramadān. My friend Ramadān is maybe taking silence.” “If you want to talk to Me,” He says, “open this Book, and I’ll talk to you through this Book. Sit with your eyes closed, and I’ll talk to you through your heart.” When you go out during the day, carry some of those words We talked about all night with you. Don’t sleep from Fajr to Asr. Don’t do that just to get to the next *iftar*.

We want to count these pearls, these sapphires, these gems of knowledge and wisdom that come to our house to visit us. “Well, it’s time to fast; I’m going to leave the house.” No. We fast in the house. We want to have the blessings and acceptance of Allah (swt). So, I don’t need to pray for those things to come to me. It’s all promised. I read it all to you. What we want to pray for is that Allah is pleased. We fast *fī sabīli-llāh*, for the sake of Allah. The greatest gift Allah (swt) can give us is the gift of sincerity/*ikhlas* during this month. So you approach the month of Ramadān with sincerity and good intentions, and to be aware of and in the presence of and near to that Divine Reality.

I’m very grateful we are among those who can fast, and I hope you are too. We understand that this is a month of patience and perseverance, and the reward for true patience is contentment and fulfillment and happiness. If one has endless amounts of contentment and happiness and fulfillment, and gratitude and patience, that could be a description of someone living in Paradise, wouldn’t it? Since we all know we are only passing through this world, we can know that as we pass through this world and move to another dimension, we can bring those good qualities with us. It’s also a month when we should have sympathy for others, our fellow human beings, and empathy for them. Provisions are increased also. Whoever feeds a fasting person in order to end the fast at sunset, there will be forgiveness of their sins. That’s wonderful, but there is also just the wonder and blessing of feeding someone who needs to be fed, caring for someone who needs to be cared for. It’s a no-brainer.

If you see someone in need, and you fulfill the need, how do you feel when you fulfill that need? The Prophet (sal) said, “***In this month there are four things we should endeavor to perform in great number. Two of those to please your Lord, and two of those you cannot make do without.***” Remember? I think we have to remember that those are. So I’m going to repeat them.

In this month there are four things you should endeavor to perform in great number, two of which are to please your Lord, and the other two are those

without which you cannot make do. Those which shall please your lord are those which you should do in great quantity: recite the testimony bearing witness to the oneness of Allah, ash-hadu an lā ‘ilaha wa-ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Rasūlullāh, and beg Allah for forgiveness for your wrong doings. As for those which without you cannot make do, you should ask Allah (swt) for the means of being a good person, so the doors of paradise are open to you and entering paradise and seek refuge in Allah (swt) from all those things you need refuge from.

Many things happen during the month of Ramadān that are attributed to the month of Ramadān. Ibrahim (as) received the scriptures on the first and third of this month. We know that Sidna Daoud (rah) received the songs. Sidna Musa (as) received the Tablet, and the Prophet Isa (as) received the Injīl. We know the close connection with Divine Scriptures during the month of Ramadān. Recitation of Qur’an should be done during this month. The Archangel Jibreel used to recite the whole Qur’an to the Prophet (sal) during this month, hence the tradition of reciting the whole Qur’an. It is said that the Prophet (sal) used to recite, and Jibreel used to listen. By combining these traditions, the *ulema* have said it is recommended to recite the Qur’an in such a manner. What can be recited is any part of the Qur’an, the parts that are meaningful to you, but recite them in Arabic and study them in the language you understand. Don’t just recite.

Inshā’a-LLāh, we enter this month with awareness of tradition and inspiration, awareness of the promises made by the Prophet Mohammed (sal), awareness of our duties and responsibilities. We enter with some patience and with love and with forbearance, and we should bear our fasting with that patience, if we can fast. If we can’t fast from food, we can fast from many other things. We should try to fulfill all the duties of a believer, and remember that this is a deep and long tradition Allah has given to all His Prophets and followers. Fasting did not begin with just Islam. The Christians fasted before, and the Jews fasted before that. Sympathy during this month can be of many kinds. If ten

things are provided for us in a meal, then 3 or 4 of them should be set aside for others. If we do not live in a village and cannot just walk out the door and hand it to someone who is poor, then we should contribute a portion of our wealth to the poor. If we don't have that, remember what I said to some of the young ladies, then we should just remove a stone from the pathway.

We should try to show sympathy to those in need, even if we can't provide for that, and empathy for their situation. There is much we can do in this month. There are people we can feed with food, and people we can feed with our love, care, and concern. As Ramadān comes near to us in the next couple of day, I hope we know that what is coming near to us is a very special friend. I hope you know that friend carries the mercy and compassion and forgiveness and the love that is Allah (swt). I hope that we all understand and have joy and pride in our hearts that we have this tradition that remains with us, that others have lost. We should show Allah (swt) our righteousness, and we should know that our own pitiful state we might be in is something that we can be lifted up from by the Mercy of Allah. Ask Allah's forgiveness and perform the prayers in tarawīh if we can, and read about the examples of the prophets, especially Prophet Muhammed during this time, and do our very best. *inshā'a-Llāh*, the thing that all Muslims can do exactly in the same way at the same time.

We all follow the five pillars, but there are different ways prayer is done, for example. There are different interpretations between different groups on how *zakat* is given. But there are two things we can do the same: we fast the same way, and we make *hajj* in the same way. All the exemptions apply to everyone across the board. There is a deep mysticism in this, and a deep meaning in all this. Take the time to reflect upon it, even though you may be at work, at school, in some difficult circumstance. Remember that Allah (swt) is present in your life all the time, not far from you, but very near to you. *Amin*. (Du'ās).

SECOND KHUTBAH Du'ās.