

RAMADHAAN

THE MONTH OF VIRTUES

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Published by: 
Jamiatul Ulama (KZN)
Ta'limi Board
4 Third Avenue
P.O.Box 26024
Isipingo Beach
4115
South Africa
Tel: +27-31 912 2172
Fax: +27-31 902 9268
E-mail: talimiboard@webmail.co.za

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Prepared by:
Jamiatul Ulama (KZN)
Ta'limi Board

Contents

Rasulullah's ﷺ Lecture on the last day of Shabaan.....	1
Our Faults.....	3
Advice.....	4
Kindness for the unfortunate.....	6
Five Ramadhan's Gifts to this Ummah.....	9
Only a Very Unfortunate Person would remain deprived of forgiveness in Ramadhan	13
Show Allah ﷻ Your Righteousness in Ramadhan	16
Freedom from Jahannam and Acceptance of Dua	17
Three Persons whose Dua is surely accepted.....	18
IMPORTANCE OF SUHUR (SAHOOR-the meal before Dawn)	
Mercy of Allah and His Angels on those who eat Sahoor.....	21
Virtues of Sahoor.....	22
Many Fast and Worship at Night but earn nothing but Hunger and lost sleep	24
Fasting is a Protective Shield.....	25
A single fast of Ramadhan more valuable than a lifetime of Fasts outside Ramadhan.....	30
LAYLATUL QADR	32
THE ORIGIN.....	33
All Sins Forgiven on Worshipping during this Night	36
To be deprived of Laylatul Qadr is to be deprived of all good.....	38
Descent of the Angels.....	39
When to look for Laylatul Qadr?	40
Exact Knowledge of Laylatul Qadr was taken away.....	41
Signs of Laylatul Qadr.....	47
What Dua one should make in Laylatul Qadr.....	48
I'ITIKAAF.....	49
The Last Night of Ramadhan	52

Ramadhan the month of virtues

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Rasulullah's ﷺ Lecture on the last day of Shabaan

Salmaan ؓ reports that on the last day of Shabaan Rasulullah ﷺ advised us and said:

“O People there comes over you now a great month, a most blessed month in which lies a night greater in value and goodness than a thousand months. It is a month in which Allah ﷻ has made fasting compulsory by day and has made sunnah the Taraweeh salaah by night. Whosoever wants to be close to Allah ﷻ by doing any good deed, for such person shall be the reward like the one who had performed a Fardh in any other time and whoever performs a Fardh, shall be blessed with the reward of **seventy** faraidh in any other time.

This is indeed the month of patience and the reward for true patience is Jannah (paradise). It is the month of kindness with everyone. It is the month wherein a true believer's rizq or provisions (food, money etc) are increased. Whosoever feeds another who fasted, in order to break the fast (at sunset), for the one who feeds there shall be forgiveness of sins and freedom from the fire of Jahannam (hell) and for him shall be the same reward as the one who fasted (who he fed) without that persons reward being decreased in the least.

Thereupon we said, ‘O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, not all of us have the means whereby we can give a fasting person to break his fast. Rasulullah ﷺ replied, “Allah ﷻ grants the same reward to the one who gives a fasting person to break the fast a simple date or a drink of water or a sip of milk.”

This is a month, the first of which brings Allah's ﷻ **mercy**, the middle of which brings His **forgiveness** and the last of which brings **freedom from the fire of Jahannam**.

Whosoever gives less work to his servants or workers (who are also fasting in this month), Allah will forgive him and free him from the fire of Jahannam.

In this month four things you should perform in great number, two of which shall be to please your Lord, while the other two shall be those without which you cannot do. Those which shall be to please your Lord, are that you should recite in great number the Kalimah Tayibbah Laa Ilaaha illallah (i.e. To bear witness that there is no god except Allah) and recite Istighfaar (beg Allah's forgiveness with Astaghfirullah) and as for those without which you cannot do, you should beg of Allah ﷻ entrance into Jannah and ask protection in Him from Jahannam.

And whoever gives a fasting person water to drink, Allah ﷻ shall grant him to drink from My fountain, such a drink after which that person shall never feel thirsty again until he enters Jannah. (reported by Ibn Khuzaimah in his 'Saheeh'.)

COMMENTARY

All the points in this Hadith have been explained in many other Ahaadith on the great virtues of Ramadhaan.

Rasulullah ﷺ delivered this lecture at the end of Shabaan, the reason being that he wanted to show us the great importance of Ramadhaan so that we do not allow one second of this month to go by without giving it the importance it deserves.

Fasting has been made compulsory by Allah ﷻ who also made sunnah the Taraweeh Salaah by night.

From this Hadith it is noted that the command for Taraweeh salaah too comes from Allah Himself. Besides this in all the Ahaadith wherein Rasulallah ﷺ says, I have made it *sunnah* is to stress its importance. All the Ulama of the Ahlus sunnah wal Jamaat are agreed upon the fact that Taraweeh is sunnah. Moulana Shah

Abdullah Dehlawi wrote in his book, *Maa Thabata Bis Sunnah* states that should the people of any town fail to perform Taraweeh Salaah, the Muslim ruler should make them do so by force.

Many are of the opinion that one may listen to the full Qur'aan being recited in a certain Musjid in eight or ten nights and then stop performing Taraweeh with Jamaah as the virtue of the sunnah will have been attained. This is wrong, by doing this the one sunnah will be fulfilled and the other lost. There are two things. Firstly, it is sunnah to hear the full Qur'aan being recited in the Taraweeh in Ramadhaan. Secondly, it is sunnah to perform Taraweeh with Jamaah for men in the Musjid throughout Ramadhaan. Females should perform their Taraweeh at home.

Another point that is brought to our notice in the Hadith is that Rasulallah ﷺ informed us that any Nafil deed in Ramadhaan is rewarded as much as a fardh in normal times and a fardh in Ramadhaan have the reward of seventy faraidh at other times.

Our Faults

How much importance do we attach to our Ibaadah or worship it in Ramadhaan? How many Nafil do we perform? We see how many people who after having eaten Sehri get back into bed without performing the Fajr Salaah. Many perform it, but not with Jamaah. It gives the impression that we give thanks to Allah for the food we had eaten for Sehri by not performing the most important fardh or by not performing it with Jamaah. Such a Salaah has been termed defective.

Rasulallah ﷺ said that "There is no Salaah for those near the Musjid except in the Musjid." In the Kitaab Mazhaahire Haq we find that there is no reward for the Salaah of persons who do not perform Salaah with Jamaah without any valid reason or excuse.

Similarly, in many cases at the time of Iftaar, Maghrib Salaah is missed, and many do not come to the Musjid. Some miss the Takbeer

at the beginning or miss the first rakaah. Many people hurry to get over the Taraweeh Salaah and even perform the Isha Salaah before the time of Isha commences. (Some do not pay any attention to Salaah even in Ramadhaan).

That is the way we look after our very important Fardh Salaah in Ramadhaan. Sometimes in the process of performing one Fardh of fasting three others are destroyed. How often do we see even the time of Zuhr Salaat, going by because we are asleep, while time of Asr goes by because we are too busy buying, selling or cooking to prepare for Iftaar.

If such is the case with the faraidh, then we can imagine how much less importance is given to the Nafil actions. One finds that because of sleep, the time of Salaatul Ishraq (after sunrise) and Salaatul Dhuhaa (before noon) go by.

Then what about Salaatul Awwabeen (just after Maghrib)? Here we find ourselves busy with Iftaar and when thinking about Taraweeh after Esha this Salaah too is neglected. Further we find that for Salaatul Tahajjud the time is the same as that for Sehri with the result that this too goes by. One may make a thousand excuses for not finding time for these Nawaafil. These are all excuses for not performing these Salaah.

Advice

There is very strong link between Ramadhaan and the Tilaawah of the Qur'aan. Almost all Allah's great holy books were revealed in this month. Similarly, in this month the Qur'aan was brought down from the Lowhul Mahfoozh (preserved tablet) to the Samaaud Dunyaa (Earthly sky), from where it was revealed bit by bit to Rasulallah ﷺ in a period of twenty three years.

There is a great connection between the Qur'aan and the month of Ramadhaan. For this reason, as much Tilaawah of the Qur'aan as

possible should be made during this month. Such was the habit of our saints, Jibraeel ؑ used to recite the whole Qur'aan to our Nabi ﷺ in the month of Ramadhaan. In some reports it is stated that Rasulallah ﷺ used to recite and he (Jibraeel ؑ) used to listen.

From joining these reports the Ulama have said that it is Mustahab to read Qur'aan in such a manner that while one recites the other listens. Thereafter, another recites while others listen. So recite the Qur'aan as much as possible. Whatever time remains thereafter should not be wasted.

Rasulallah ﷺ drew our attention to four more things and advised that we should practice them as much as possible. They are the recitation of ***Kalimah Tayibbah, Istighfaar, begging for Jannah and seeking refuge from Jahannam.*** Therefore, it must be regarded an honour to spend as much time as available in these recitations. This will be the true appreciation of the teachings of Rasulallah ﷺ. What is so difficult about keeping the tongue busy with the recitation of Durood (Salawaat) or Laa Ilaha illallah while being engaged in our daily tasks?

In the same Hadith Rasulallah ﷺ said a few more things, Ramadhaan is the month of patience.

So if great difficulty is experienced in fasting one should bear it with patience. One should not complain as people are fond of doing during hot days. If by chance Sehri is missed then too one should not complain. Similarly, should any difficulty or trial be experienced one should bear it with patience, otherwise, these deeds may be empty of blessings. When we turn our backs on worldly things, give up our very eating and drinking, then in the face of Allah's pleasure what are these difficulties.

Kindness for the unfortunate

Further, the Hadith states that it is the month of sympathy and kindness, especially for the poor and needy. Sympathy should be of a practical nature. When ten things are placed before us for Iftaar, at least two or four of them should be set aside for the poor and needy. They should be treated more favourably, if not then at least equally and should certainly be remembered. The Sahabah ؓ were living examples in showing sympathy for the poor, it is our duty to follow or at least try to follow them.

In the matter of sacrifice and sympathy only the brave can follow the Sahabah ؓ. There are many instances, if they are mentioned it will only leave one in amazement.

Let us see the following example, Abu Jahm ؓ relates that, during the battle of Yarmouk he went in search of his cousins, taking with him a water bag to give him to drink and also wash his wounds if he was found alive or wounded. He found him lying among the wounded. When I asked him whether he wanted some water, he indicated 'Yes'. At that moment someone near him moaned. My cousin pointed to that person indicating that I should first quench the thirst of the neighbour. I went to him and found that he too needed water, but just as I was about to give him water, a third person groaned near him. The second one pointed to this third person meaning that I should give the third one to drink first. I went to the third person but before he could drink, I found out that he had passed away, where upon I returned to the second one only to find that he too had passed away. When I came to my cousin, he too had become a martyr.

This is the type of caring character our forefathers had. They preferred to die thirsty rather than to drink before a strange Muslim brother. May Allah be pleased with them all and grant us ability to follow in their footsteps. Aameen

In another Hadith it is stated that whosoever feeds the hungry, clothes the naked and grants shelter to the traveller, Allah shall save him from the terrors of Qiyaamah. Further, Rasulullah ﷺ mentioned the virtue of feeding a fasting person at the time of breaking the fast. In one Hadith it is reported that upon him who feeds a person to break the fast out of his Halaal earnings, the angels grant mercy upon him during the nights of Ramadhaan, and on the night of Laylatul Qadr Jibraeel ؑ shakes hands with him. The sign of this is that his heart becomes soft while tears flow from his eyes.

Hammad bin Salamah, a very famous Muhaddith used to feed fifty people every day during Ramadhaan at Iftaar. (Roohul Bayan).

Thereafter, the Hadith of Rasulullah ﷺ called the first section of Ramadhaan the coming of mercy, whereby it is meant that Allah's favour is with the believers. Those who are thankful to Allah for His bounties, receive even more. The Qur'aan says "If you are thankful, I will surely grant you more."

During the second section of Ramadhaan forgiveness begins to descend as a reward for the fasting during the first section. The last section of the Ramadhaan brings protection from entrance into Jahannam. This is supported by many similar Ahaadith.

In my personal opinion, Ramadhaan has been divided into three sections because people are normally of three different kinds. Firstly, there are those who have no weight of sins. For them Allah's Mercy and Bounties descend from the very beginning of Ramadhaan.

Secondly, there are those whose burden of sins are not too heavy for them forgiveness descend after one third of Ramadhaan has passed. Thirdly, there are the real sinners. For them forgiveness comes after having fasted the major section of Ramadhaan. As those who attained Allah's Mercy right at the beginning, they are the very fortunate ones because of the great amount of mercy they have received. (And Allah knows best).

Another point mentioned in the Ahaadith is that masters should be merciful to their servants in Ramadhāan because, after all, they too are fasting. Unnecessary hard work or too much of it will be a difficult for them. So an extra worker should be hired when the work is too much. That of course, only applies when the servant himself fasts, otherwise there is no difference for them between Ramadhāan and any other month.

Lastly, in the Hadith Rasulallah ﷺ encouraged that four things should be repeated constantly. Firstly, the recitation of Kalimah Tayyibah, which in the Ahaadith is called the highest form of Zikr. In Mishkat, Abu Saeed Khudri ؓ reports, Once Nabi Moosa ؑ begged of Allah to grant him a special prayer by which he can remember Allah and also (by which he could) ask Him. Then Allah ﷻ informed him to recite this Kalimah. Sayyidina Moosa ؑ said, “O Allah this is a verse recited by all your servants, I desire a special prayer.” Allah ﷻ replied, “O Moosa, if the seven heavens, the earth and all its occupants including the angels except Myself are placed on one side of a scale and this Kalimah on the other, then this Kalimah will outweigh everything.

In another Hadith it is stated, Should anyone sincerely recite this Kalimah, the doors of Jannah open up for him immediately and nothing can stop him from reaching Allah’s Throne. The only condition is that the reciter should refrain from major sins.

The Kalimah Tayyibah is the most excellent form of Zikr. Allah has made it common to humanity, so that none is deprived of it. Hence, if any person is deprived of it, it is only due to his misfortune. There are numerous Ahaadith regarding its virtues.

The second which should be recited plentifully is Istighfaar. The Ahaadith report many virtues of Istighfaar and in one Hadith we read “Whoever makes much Istighfaar, Allah opens a way out for him from all difficulties and releases him from all sadness. In a similar manner, he receives Rizq (food, money etc) from unexpected

sources”. In another Hadith Rasulallah ﷺ said that, “Every man is sinner, but the best among the sinners are those who repent and seek forgiveness. In one Hadith it is mentioned that, “When a man commits a sin, a black spot forms on his heart, but when he asks for forgiveness, it is washed away, if not, the black spot remains”.

Thereafter, Rasulallah ﷺ commanded us to beg two things without which we cannot do, to beg Allah for entrance into Jannah and to seek protection in Him from Jahannam.

May Allah grant us this good fortune. Aameen

Five Ramadhāan’s Gifts to this Ummah

Abu Hurairah ؓ relates that Rasulallah ﷺ said “My Ummah has been given five special things that were not given to anyone before them. The smell from the mouth of a fasting Muslim is sweeter for Allah ﷻ than the pleasant smell of musk. The Fish in the sea seek forgiveness on their behalf until they break their fast. Allah ﷻ prepares and decorates His special Jannah every day and then says: “The time is near when My faithful servants shall put away the load (of the world) and come to you.” In this month, the evil shayateen are chained, so as not to cause those evils which they normally do during months other than Ramadhāan. On the last night of Ramadhāan, the fasting Muslims are forgiven. The Sahabah thereupon inquired, “O Rasulallah ﷺ is that the night “Laylat ul Qadr?” Rasulallah ﷺ replied, “No, But it is only right that a servant should be given his reward on having completed his duty.”

Note: Five gifts from Allah ﷻ were not granted to the (fasting) people before Islam. If only we could truly appreciate how great this bounty from Allah ﷻ really is, we would sincerely try to gain those special favours.

First, we are told that the smell from the mouth of the fasting person is more pleasant for Allah ﷻ than the smell of musk. There are three most acceptable explanations:

- a. Some are of the opinion that, in the Aakhirah (Hereafter), Allah ﷻ shall reward that smell from the mouth with a pleasing smell more sweet and refreshing than musk (Durre Manthur)
- b. On the day of Qiyamah when we shall rise from our graves, a sweet smell shall come from the mouths of those who fasted and that shall be better than musk.
- c. In my opinion, the view that in this very world the smell is more pleasing for Allah ﷻ than musk. This shows the ties of love between Allah ﷻ and His fasting slaves.

We all know that even an unpleasant smell from a person whom one loves truly and sincerely is in itself attractive to the lover, who in this case is Allah ﷻ Himself. What is shown is the closeness to Allah ﷻ with the fasting person.

Fasting is one of the most pleasing forms of worship in Allah ﷻ sight and for this reason a Hadith states that the reward for every deed is brought by the angels, but Allah ﷻ says “The reward for fasting, I Myself will give, because it is for Me alone”. Another report of the same Hadith (when read in a different way) says “I Myself become his reward”. And what greater reward can there be for the lover than to meet the Beloved?

In another Hadith, we read “Fasting is the door to all other forms of worship of Allah”. This means that, through fasting, the heart becomes encouraged to other forms of worship. This is the case if the fast is kept with all its requirements (as shall be explained later), and is not merely remaining hungry and thirsty.

The second special favour is that the fish in the sea seek forgiveness for him who fasts. The purpose here is to explain that many living beings make Dua on his behalf. My uncle, Moulana Muhammad

Ilyas رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ used to say that this is apparently so because Allah ﷻ says in the Qur’aan says “Certainly those who believe and do righteous deeds, Allah ﷻ shall make them beloved (in this world)” (Maryam 96).

One Hadith explains this further “When Allah ﷻ loves a person, He says to the angel Jibraeel ﷺ, ‘I love that person, so you also love him.’ Jibraeel ﷺ then also loves that person and announces in 1st heavens ‘That person is loved by Allah ﷻ, you all should also love him.’ Then all the creations of the heavens begin to love him. Then, love for that person spreads all over the earth. Normally only those who are near to a person seem to love him, but here that love spreads all over, even the animals in the jungle and the fish in the seas do the same. They all then make Dua on his behalf.

The third favour given to the fasting persons is that Jannah is decorated for them. The Hadith states that at the beginning of every year, Jannah begins to be decorated for Ramadhaan. We know that when an important person is expected to arrive, great care is taken in the preparations for his welcome. For example, in a marriage preparations commence months in advance, likewise it is with Ramadhaan.

The fourth favour is that evil shayateen (devils) are chained, as a result of which evil is decreased. One would have expected that, because of the great desire for worship of Allah in the blessed month of Ramadhaan, the shayateen would try just as hard to pull the faithful away from the right path, so that much more evil would be committed. That is not the case.

On the opposite we see so much less evil. How many drunkards do we not see, who just because of the blessed month of Ramadhaan, do not drink any wine? How many other evildoers do we not see giving up evil acts during the blessed month of Ramadhaan?

A question may arise here that, when the shayateen are chained, how is it that we still do see evil being committed, even though to a lesser degree? The reply is that all evil may not necessarily be caused by the evil shayateen. Having for eleven months lived in obedience to the evil designs and wishes of shayateen, the performance of evil deeds caused by them becomes second nature, and so evil is being done in and out of Ramadhaan.

For this reason we find those who normally commit evil continue to commit some of it in Ramadhaan. Thus, even though shayateen have been chained, their influence on us has become so strong that we follow their path of our own accord. Another important point is the Nabi ﷺ has said, “When a person commits a sin, a black spot forms on his heart, when he sincerely repents, it is removed otherwise it remains. When he again commits a sin another spot forms (and so on), until his heart becomes completely black. Then nothing good can enter his heart. When a person commits a sin, a black spot forms on his heart, when he sincerely repents, it is removed otherwise it remains. When he again commits a sin another spot forms (and so on), until his heart becomes completely black. Then nothing good can enter his heart.

Referring to this, Allah ﷻ says in the Qur’aan, “Never! But on their heart is the stain (of Evil)” (Al-Munafiqeen 14). Thus their hearts become totally stained, in such cases, these hearts have a natural leaning towards those sins. This is the reason why many people fearlessly commit one type of sin, but when considering another sin of similar degree, then their hearts refuse to do it.

For example, those who drink wine, if told to eat pork would hate it, whereas these two misdeeds are equally sinful. Similarly, the heart is stained by them, thus resulting in these sins being committed even without any action of the shayateen.

My personal opinion is that not all the shayateen are chained, only the most evil ones are. All of us can see that in Ramadhaan, It does

not require a great amount of effort and energy to perform a good deed. Neither does it require a great deal of self control and sacrifice to avoid evil, as at other times.

Moulana Shah Ishaq was of the opinion that, for the evil people, only the most evil shayateen are chained, whereas for the righteous ones all shayateen are chained.

The fifth favour is that forgiveness is granted on the final night of Ramadhaan. (See previous Hadith). Because of this great favour, the Sahabah thought that this must be Laylat ul Qadr. They knew the great blessings of that night and accordingly asked whether it meant Laylat ul Qadr. The reply was that it was not. This is merely the favour granted for having fasted to the end of Ramadhaan.

Only a Very Unfortunate Person would remain deprived of forgiveness in Ramadhaan

Kaab Ibn Ujrah ؓ relates that Rasulullah ﷺ said, Come near to the mimbar and we came near the mimbar. When He ﷺ climbed the first step of the mimbar, He ﷺ said “Aameen”, When He ﷺ climbed the second step, He ﷺ said “Aameen”, When He ﷺ climbed the third step, He ﷺ said “Aameen” When He ﷺ came down, We said “O Rasool of Allah ﷺ, we have heard from you today something which we never heard before.” He ﷺ said “When I climbed the first step, the angel Jibraeel ؑ appeared before me and said “Destruction to him who found the blessed month of Ramadhaan and let it pass by without gaining forgiveness” upon that, I said ‘Aameen’. When I climbed the second step, he said, “Destruction to him before whom thy name is taken and then he does not make Dua for Allah’s blessing on me (by saying, for example Sallallahu Alaihi wasallam).” I replied ‘Aameen’. When I climbed the third step, he said “Destruction unto him in whose lifetime his parents or either one of them reaches old age, and (through failure to serve them) he is not allowed to enter Jannah”. I said ‘Aameen’.

Note: In this Hadith, it appears that Jibraeel ﷺ made three curses, upon which Rasulullāh ﷺ said “Aameen” every time.

In al-Durr al-Mansoor, it is reported that Jibraeel ﷺ advised Rasulullāh ﷺ to say ‘Aameen’. Being an angel of such high mark, Jibraeel’s ﷺ giving these curses is sure to be accepted. May Allah ﷻ in His infinite mercy grant us His help and save us from these three dangers.

The first person described above is he who, even in the blessed month of Ramadhaan, spends the days in sin and disregards his duties, thus he does not get forgiveness. Ramadhaan is the month of Allah’s ﷻ mercy and if even this month is spent carelessly, how can he expect to be pardoned for his sins? If he cannot gain Allah’s ﷻ forgiveness in Ramadhaan, then when will he do so? The way to seek Allah’s ﷻ pardon for his sins is to fulfil his duties in Ramadhaan as ordered by Allah ﷻ, such as fasting, offering Taraweeh Salaah and asking for Allah’s ﷻ forgiveness for past sins.

The second unfortunate person is he who hears Rasulullāh’s ﷺ name mentioned and yet does not make Dua for Allah’s blessings on him i.e. Durood. For this reason, some Ulama consider it compulsory to recite Durood whenever the name of Muhammad ﷺ is mentioned. In some Ahaadith, the person who fails to do so is called unfortunate and stingy. Such people are described as those who would lose the way to Jannah, or even among those who will enter Jahannam or those who will not look upon the blessed face of Rasulullāh ﷺ. The Ulama give us various interpretations of these Ahaadith. The fact still remains that failure to make Dua for Allah’s blessing on the Nabi ﷺ is indeed very unfortunate.

And why should it not be? After all, the favours bestowed upon this Ummah through Rasulullāh ﷺ are so great that neither our writings nor our lectures can do justice in describing them. His favours on us are indeed very great. Therefore, any warning for the neglect of making Dua for Allah’s ﷻ blessing on the Nabi ﷺ is acceptable.

On the other hand, the reward for reciting Durood is very great. The Hadith teaches us that whosoever recites Durood once, Allah ﷻ sends blessing on him ten times and the angels make Dua for him. All his sins are forgiven, his status is raised and his reward will be as mount Uhud and on the day of Qiyamah. Rasulullāh ﷺ shall ask Allah ﷻ to forgive him.

More promises of reward are: Obtaining Allah’s ﷻ pleasure, mercy and safety against His anger, safety from the fears of Qiyamah, seeing one’s promised place in Jannah while still alive on this earth. Besides these, there is the promise of never being troubled by poverty and need, and of enjoying nearness to Rasulullāh ﷺ, the promise of help against enemies and the promise of being loved by others. The learned in Islamic law have said that it is compulsory to recite Durood at least once in a lifetime and all the Ulama are agreed upon this. There is, however, difference of opinion on whether it is compulsory recite Durood each time his name is mentioned or whether it is only preferred.

The third person described in the above Hadith is he, in whose lifetime one or both of his parents reach old age, and yet he is unable to gain Jannah by serving them. The Ulama have stated that in every permissible act, it is compulsory to obey the parents commands. One should not be disrespectful to them and be humble, even though they are non-believers. Neither should one raise one’s voice above theirs, nor address them by their names. When they have to be called towards good and prohibited from evil, it should be done mercifully and one should continue to make Dua for them even if they refuse to accept.

In a Hadith it is related at all times, they should be honoured and respected. It is also related the best of doors for entering Jannah is the father. If you wish, look after it and if you wish, destroy it.

A Sahabi inquired from Rasulullāh ﷺ, “What are the rights due to parents?” He ﷺ replied, “They are your Jannah and your Jahannam!

i.e. Their pleasure leads you to Jannah while their displeasure leads you to Jahannam.” Further, it is stated in a Hadith that when an obedient son looks with love and affection at his parents, the reward for that gaze shall be an accepted Hajj. In another Hadith, it is stated that except joining partners with Allah ﷻ, Allah ﷻ forgives all sins as He pleases. However, He causes punishment in return for disobedience to parents, right in this world before death.

A Sahabi said, “O Rasul of Allah ﷺ, I want to go for Jihad Rasulallah ﷺ asked, “Is your mother alive?” He replied, “Yes, Rasulallah ﷺ then said, “Serve Her, Jannah lies under her feet for you. Again another Hadith says, “The pleasure of Allah ﷻ lies in pleasing one’s father, and Allah’s ﷻ displeasure lies in displeasing one’s father.

However, if ones parents were not respected and treated properly and are now dead, there is a remedy for their children according to the Shariah. The Hadith teaches us that, in such cases, one should always make Dua for their forgiveness. By doing so, you will be counted among those who are obedient. Another Hadith states that the best deed one can do after the death of one’s father is to treat his friends and companions in a friendly manner (as the father would have done).

Show Allah ﷻ Your Righteousness in Ramadhaan

Ubaadah Ibn Saamit ؓ reports that Rasulallah ﷺ said one day when Ramadhaan had come near. “Ramadhaan, the month of blessings has come upon you, wherein Allah ﷻ turns towards you and sends to you His special blessings, forgives your faults, accepts your Duas, appreciates your competing for the greatest good and boasts to the angels about you. So show to Allah ﷻ your righteousness; for truly, the most pitiful and unfortunate one is he who is deprived of Allah’s ﷻ mercy in this month.

Note: In this Hadith, we read, about the spirit of competition among the believers, each one trying to do more good deeds than the others. In our home, I am greatly pleased at seeing how the womenfolk compete with each other, the one trying to recite more of the Qur’aan than the others, so that, inspite of household responsibilities, each one reads half to two thirds of the Qur’aan daily. I mention this only out of a sense of gratitude to Allah ﷻ, indicating His favour and not to boast of it. May Allah ﷻ accept their deeds and ours, and increase our capacity for good deeds.

Freedom from Jahannam and Acceptance of Dua

AbuSaeed al-Khudree ؓ relates that Rasulallah ﷺ said: “During each day and night of Ramadhaan, Allah ﷻ sets free a great number of souls from Jahannam. And from every Muslim, during each day and night at least one Dua is certainly accepted.”

Note: Apart from this Hadith, there are many others stating that the Dua of a fasting person is accepted (Mustajaab). In one Hadith, we read that the Dua is accepted at the time of breaking the fast, but we are generally so engaged in eating, that we neglect this opportunity.

The well known Dua for breaking the fast is often forgotten: “Allaahumma laka sumto wa bika aamantu wa alayka tawakkaltu wa alaa rizqika aftar tu” (O Allah for You have I fasted, in You do I believe, and on You do I rely, and now I break this fast with food coming from You.) Abdullah Ibn Amr ؓ used to make the following Dua at breaking the fast. “Allaa-humma innee as’aluka bi-rahmatikallatee wasita kulla shayin an taghfira lee” (O Allah, I beg You, through Your infinite mercy, which surrounds all things, to forgive me.)

In some books we read that Rasulallah ﷺ used to say: “Yaa waasi al-fadli-igh-firlee (O You who give Great Bounties, forgive me). Many other Duas have been indicated for breaking the fast, but no special Dua is fixed. This time (at breaking the fast) is one when Dua

is accepted; ask and submit before Allah ﷻ all your needs (and, if you remember, then make Dua for me too).

Three Persons whose Dua is surely accepted

Abu Hurairah ؓ reports, Rasulullah ﷺ said: “There are three persons whose Dua is not rejected, The fasting person until he breaks the fast, the just ruler and the oppressed person, whose Dua Allah ﷻ lifts above the clouds and opens unto it the doors of Jannah and Allah ﷻ says, “I swear by my honour, verily, I shall assist you, even though it may be after sometime.”

Note: In al-Durr al Mansoor, it is reported from Aa’isha رضي الله عنها that, when Ramadhaan appeared, the colour of Rasulullah’s ﷺ face used to change. He then used to increase his Salaah, become even more humble in his Dua and show even more fear of Allah ﷻ.

According to another report, he hardly ever lay down in bed until Ramadhaan came to an end, Further, it is stated that the Angels carrying Allah’s ﷻ throne are commanded in Ramadhaan to leave aside everything else and say ‘Aameen’ to the Dua of those who fast. Numerous are the Ahaadith stating that the fasting person’s Duas are answered. When Allah ﷻ has so promised and His truthful Nabi ﷺ has informed us, there should be no doubt whatsoever about the truth of these promises.

Yet it is strange that, in spite of this, we still find such people who apparently do not get what they make Dua for. They ask and do not receive, but this does not mean that their Dua has been rejected. One should at this point understand what is meant by a Dua being answered.

Rasulullah ﷺ has informed us that when a Muslim makes Dua for anything from Allah ﷻ, on the condition that he does not make Dua for breaking off from his near relatives or for anything sinful, he definitely receives one out of the following three things: he gets the

exact thing which he asked for. If that is not received, then Allah ﷻ either removes from his path some great calamity in exchange for what he desired, or the reward for that thing for which he made Dua is stored for him in the Aakhirah (Hereafter).

Another Hadith states that on the day of Qiyamah, Allah ﷻ will call his slave and say to him: “O My slave, I used to command you to ask of Me and promised to answer. Did you beg of Me?” The slave will answer: “Yes I did.” Then Allah ﷻ shall reply: “You did not put forth any Dua which has not been accepted. You made Dua that a certain calamity should be removed, which I did for you in the worldly life. You made Dua that a certain sorrow should be removed from you, but the result of that Dua was not known to you. I have fixed for you such and such reward in the Aakhirah (Hereafter).”

Rasulullah ﷺ says that the man shall again be reminded of each and every Dua and he shall be shown how it had been fulfilled in the world or else what reward had been stored for him in the Aakhirah (Hereafter). On seeing that reward, he shall wish that not a single Dua of his had been answered on earth, so that he could receive the full rewards only in the Aakhirah (Hereafter).

Yes, Dua is indeed very important and to neglect it at any time is a matter of great loss. Even when the outward signs seem to indicate that our Dua is not accepted, hope should not be lost. Even from the lengthy Hadith at the end of this booklet, it is clear that Allah ﷻ in accepting Dua considers, first of all, our own good and welfare. Should Allah ﷻ find that granting us what we request from Him is for our welfare and interest, He grants it, otherwise not. Actually, it is Allah’s ﷻ favour on us that we do not always get what we ask for because, very often, due to our lack of understanding, we beg for things that are not beneficial at a particular time.

Here I must draw your attention to the fact that men as well as women suffer from a bad habit of cursing their children in their anger and sorrow. Beware of this. There are certain occasions when Allah

ﷺ immediately accepts whatever Dua is made. So sometimes, due to our own stupidity, the child is cursed and when the effect of that same curse comes upon the child and lands him into a calamity, the parents go about crying and complaining. Rasulallah ﷺ commanded us not to curse ourselves, our children, possessions, or servants.

It is just possible that the curse is spoken at a time when all requests are granted, especially in Ramadhaan, which is full of such special moments of acceptance. Hence, in this month great care should be taken.

Umar ؓ narrates that Rasulallah ﷺ said, “Whosoever remembers Allah ﷻ in Ramadhaan is definitely pardoned and one who seeks a favour from Allah ﷻ is not refused.” Ibn Masood ؓ reports that, on every night of Ramadhaan, an announcing Angel from the heavens calls out: “O You seeker of good, come near, O You seeker of evil, turn away (from evil) and open your eyes. “Thereafter, that Angel calls out: “Is there any seeker of forgiveness, that he may be forgiven? Is there someone who would repent so that Allah accepts his repentance? Is there anyone requesting a Dua, that his Dua may be heard? Is there anyone wanting anything, so that his wish may be fulfilled?”

Lastly, it should be borne in mind that there are certain conditions under which Dua is accepted. In the absence of these, Duas may be often rejected.

Among these is the use of Halaal and pure food. When food not permitted by Allah is eaten, Duas are not accepted.

Rasulallah ﷺ said: “Many times a greatly troubled person lifts up his hands to the heavens, making Dua and crying: ‘O Allah! but the food he eats is forbidden by Allah ﷻ, what he drinks is forbidden, his clothes have been earned by forbidden means, then in such cases how can his Dua be accepted?’”

A story is related about a group of people in Koofa, whose Dua used to be always accepted. Whenever a cruel ruler was appointed over them, they used to make Dua for a curse upon him, which quickly came to destroy him. When Hajjaaj became ruler there, he invited these people to a feast. After they had all eaten, he said: “I am no longer afraid of the curse upon me from these people, because haraam (forbidden) food has now entered their stomachs.”

At this stage, let us think over how many things forbidden by Allah ﷻ are being eaten in these times, when people are even trying to make the taking of interest permissible. We find people going so far as to think that bribery and what is obtained through it is permissible, while our businessman very often justify their deceiving people when trading with them.

IMPORTANCE OF SUHUR (SAHOOR-the meal before Dawn) Mercy of Allah and His Angels on those who eat Sahoor

Ibn Umar ؓ relates, Rasulallah ﷺ said: “Verily Allah ﷻ and His Angels send blessings upon those who eat Sahoor”.

Note: How great is Allah’s ﷻ favour upon us that even eating before dawn for fasting is so greatly rewarded. There are many Ahaadith in which the virtues of Sahoor are explained and the rewards promised. Allama Ainee the commentator on the Saheeh Bukhari has quoted the virtues of Sahoor from seventeen different Sahabah.

Many people are deprived of this great reward because of their own laziness. Some even go so far as to finish Taraweeh, eat some food in place of Sahoor and go to bed. What great blessing do they lose! Because Sahoor actually means food eaten shortly before dawn. Some authorities say that the time for Sahoor commences after mid night (Al-Mirqaah). The author of Al-Kashshaaf (Al-Zamakhsharee) divided the night into six portions, stating that the last one of these is the time of Sahoor. So that, when the night (from sunset till dawn)

extends over twelve hours, the last two hours would be the correct time for Sahoor.

Then it must also be remembered that to eat at the last permissible time is better and greater in reward than eating earlier, on condition that no doubt arises as to whether Sahoor had been eaten before the time of dawn.

Virtues of Sahoor.

Nabi ﷺ said “The difference between our fasting and that of the Ahle Kitaab (Jews and Christians) is in our eating Sahoor, which they do not.” The Nabi ﷺ has said “Eat Sahoor, because in it lie great blessings.”

In another Hadith “In three things, are great blessings, in Jamaah (in a group), in eating thareed (a special dish) and in Sahoor. In this Hadith, the use of the word Jamaah is general, wherefrom we can see that it includes Salaah with Jamaah and all those righteous deeds done in company, as Allah’s ﷻ help comes to them.

Thareed is a tasty preparation, in which baked bread is cooked with meat. The third thing this Hadith speaks of is Sahoor. When Rasulullah ﷺ used to invite any of the Sahabah to eat Sahoor with him, he used to say: “Come and eat the blessed food with me.”

One Hadith says: “Eat Sahoor and strengthen yourself for the fast, Sleep in the afternoon (siesta) so as to get assistance in waking up in the later portion of the night (for worship of Allah). Abdullah Ibn Haarith reports that one of the Sahabah said, “I once visited Rasulullah ﷺ at a time when he was busy in taking Sahoor. Rasulullah ﷺ then said: “This is a thing full of Barakah, which Allah ﷻ has granted you. Do not give it up.”

Rasulullah ﷺ in encouraging us repeatedly for Sahoor has said: “If there is nothing else, at least eat a date or drink some water.” Thus, when there are definitely great advantages and reward in Sahoor.

Muslims should try hard to observe this practice as much as possible. However, in all things moderation is important, and going beyond the bounds of moderation is harmful, neither should so little be eaten that one feels weak throughout the period of fasting nor should so much be eaten that it causes discomfort. We have been prohibited from overeating.

In his commentary on Saheeh Bukhari, Ibn Hajar has listed various reasons for the Barakah of Sahoor,

- a) The Sunnah is followed.
- b) Through Sahoor, we distinguish ourselves from the ways of Ahle Kitaab (Jews and Christians), which we are at all times called upon to do.
- c) It provides strength for worship of Allah ﷻ
- d) It promotes greater sincerity in worship of Allah ﷻ
- e) It aids in preventing bad temper, which normally comes about as a result of hunger.
- f) Sahoor is the time when Dua is accepted.
- g) At the time of Sahoor, one gets the opportunity to remember Allah ﷻ, make Zikr and Dua.

In my opinion, the amount to be eaten varies according to different persons and their activities. For example, for those students who are busy seeking knowledge of Deen, too little food at Sahoor as well as at breaking the fast will be harmful for them it is better not to eat too little, because they seek religious knowledge, which is very important (for the preservation and spread of Islam).

Similar is the case of those who are busy with Zikr and other religious activities. Other people who have no such hard work to do should eat little at Sahoor.

Once, the Nabi ﷺ announced to those going for Jihad. “There is no virtue in fasting while travelling.” That was in the month of Ramadhaan, when some Sahabah were fasting, Of course, where one

is doing some work of Deen where eating less does not lead to weakness, it is best to eat less.

It is better that one should eat less in the nights of Ramadhaan than on other nights. After all, there is little benefit in fasting after having filled oneself at Sahoor and at breaking the fast. The religious divines have said, “Whoever remains hungry in Ramadhaan shall remain safe from the evil of Shaytan throughout the year until the next Ramadhaan.”

Many Fast and Worship at Night but earn nothing but Hunger and lost sleep

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه relates that Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم said “Many of those who fast obtain nothing through such fasting except hunger and many perform Salaah by night but obtains nothing by it except the discomfort of staying awake.”

Note: With regard to this Hadith, the Ulama have three different interpretations.

Firstly, this Hadith may refer to those who fast during the day and then for breaking the fast eat food that is forbidden by Allah ﷻ. All the reward for fasting is lost because of the greater sin of eating forbidden food and nothing is gained except remaining hungry.

Secondly, it may mean those who fast but during fasting engage themselves in backbiting and falsely accusing others (see later).

Thirdly, the person referred to may be one who, while fasting did not stay away from evil and sin.

In this Hadith all such possibilities are included. Similar, is the case of the person performing Salaah the entire night but because of backbiting or any other sinful act (e.g. missing Fajr Salaah or keeping awake for show), loses the reward for his night of worship.

Fasting is a Protective Shield

Abu Ubaydah رضي الله عنه reports, “I have heard Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم saying “Fasting is a protective shield for man, as long as he does not tear up that protection.”

Note: “Protective Shield” means: Just as a man protects himself with a shield, similarly fasting protects him from his well known enemy Shaitan. In other Ahaadith, we are told that fasting saves one from Allah’s ﷻ punishment and the fire of Jahannam in the Aakhirah (Hereafter).

Once somebody inquired from Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم, “What causes the fast to be torn?” He صلى الله عليه وسلم replied” “Telling lies and backbiting.” This Hadith, when read alone with many others, actually tells us to avoid such actions which cause fasting to be wasted.

In our times, we are fond of wasting the time with unnecessary conversations. Some Ulama are of the opinion that lies, backbiting, slander etc. actually break the fast just like eating and drinking. But the great majority of Ulama believe that the fast is not totally broken, but loses its blessing (Barakah). The Ulama of Islam tell us of six things, about which care should be taken in fasting:

First: one should keep the eyes away from any place where one should not look. Some go so far as to forbid looking at one’s own wife with desire. Let alone another woman. Similarly, looking at any evil action or where evil is committed should be avoided. (e.g. T.V, DVD’s, etc)

Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “The glance is like an arrow from Shaitan. Whosoever, out of fear of Allah ﷻ protects his gaze, Allah ﷻ shall grant him such Noor of Imaan, the taste and sweetness of which he will feel in the heart.”

The Sufis interpret the above saying to mean that those sights which should be avoided include all such places and things that take the mind away from the remembrance of Allah ﷻ.

Secondly: One should guard the tongue against lies, unnecessary conversation, backbiting, arguments, abuses etc. In the Saheeh Bukhari we read that fasting is a shield for the fasting person, for this reason, those who fast should avoid all useless talk, joking, argument, etc. Should anyone start an argument, then say “I am fasting”.

In other words, one should not start an argument and if someone else starts it, then too, one should avoid taking it up. When the person who starts an argument is not an understanding person, then at least one should remind oneself that: “I am fasting.”

During the time of our Nabi ﷺ, two women were fasting and suffered extreme hunger to such an extent that the fast became unbearable and both were on the point of death. The Sahabah brought this to the notice of our Nabi ﷺ who sent a bowl commanding them to vomit into it.

When they both vomited in the bowl, pieces of meat and fresh blood were found in it. The Sahabah were greatly surprised, upon which our Nabi ﷺ said: “They fasted with pure food from Allah ﷻ, but ate food not permitted by Allah by backbiting other people.”

From the above, it also becomes clear that, by backbiting during fasting, the fast becomes more difficult. For this reason both women were near to death. Similar, is the case with other sinful acts and experience shows that for the faithful, Allah-fearing persons, fasting is no hardship, whereas the sinful find it very difficult. One should, therefore, stay away from sins and especially from major sins, like backbiting and slander, which are often indulged in to pass time.

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur’aan that backbiting amounts to the (actual) eating of the flesh of one’s dead brother.

One of the Sahabah inquired from Rasulullah ﷺ “What is backbiting?” Rasulullah ﷺ replied: “To say something about your brother, behind his back, which he would resent.” The Sahabah then said: “And is it still backbiting if what is said about him is really true?”

Our Nabi ﷺ said: “In that case (if that which was said is really true) it is precisely backbiting; but if what is said is false, then you have in fact slandered him.”

Once our Nabi ﷺ passed by two graves. He ﷺ said: “To both the inmates of these graves, punishment is being given in the grave. One is being punished because of backbiting the other because of not having taken precautions (to stay clean) when passing urine.”

The third thing is that the person who fasts must be careful about what he hears. Whatever is forbidden to say, is also forbidden to listen too. Rasulullah ﷺ has said, “In backbiting, both the backbiter and the one who listens to it are equal partners in sin.”

Fourthly, the rest of the body should be kept away from sin and unlawful things. Neither should the hands touch it nor the feet walk towards it. Special care should be taken especially at the time of breaking the fast that no such thing enters the stomach about which there is any doubt of its being permitted by Allah ﷻ. When a person fasts and at the time of breaking the fast, breaks his fast with forbidden food. He is like a sick person who takes medicine as a cure but also adds a little poison, which kills him.

Fifthly, after having fasted, it is not advisable to fill the stomach completely even with food permitted by Allah ﷻ while breaking the fast, because then the purpose of fasting is defeated. Fasting seeks to weaken one’s bodily desires and increases one’s faith and spiritual powers.

For eleven months, we eat and drink freely enough, in Ramadhaan this should be cut down to a minimum. We have a bad habit of filling

our stomach when breaking the fast to make up for what was lost and again at Sahoor in preparation for the day, thus actually increasing our daily consumption.

Ramadhaan for such people increases their appetite. Many such items of food are eaten that we normally do not eat at other times. This type of habit is completely against the spirit of Ramadhaan and the true spirit of fasting.

Imam al-Ghazali asks the same question: “When the object of fasting is to overcome our bodily desires in opposition to Shaitan, how can this possible be done by eating excessively when breaking the fast?”

Actually in that case we have only changed the times of eating and not really fasted. In fact, by having various types of delicious foods, we consume even more than in normal times. The result is that instead of lessening the bodily desires, these are considerably increased. The real benefit of fasting comes as a result of actual hunger in the true sense. Our Nabi ﷺ said “Shaitan lives in the body of man like blood, so, close up his path by remaining hungry,” i.e. when the body is hungry, the spirit receives strength.

Apart from hunger, fasting gives us an opportunity to appreciate the condition of the poor and money less and thus creates sympathetic feelings towards them. This too can be attained by remaining hungry and not by filling the stomach with delicious foods at Sahoor, so that one does not feel hungry until one breaks the fast.

In Maraqee al-Falaah it is written: “Do not eat excessively at Sahoor, as this is a way to lose the object of fasting.” Allama al-Tahtaawi writes, “The reward for fasting becomes definitely more when hunger is really felt. Similarly, a feeling is developed for the poor and hungry ones.”

Our Nabi ﷺ himself said: “Allah ﷻ does not dislike the filling of anything to the bring more than He dislikes the filling of the

stomach.” On another occasion, Rasulullah ﷺ said, “A few morsels should be enough which can keep the back straight. The best way for man is that one third should be filled with food, one third with drink, while the other third remains empty.” Rasulullah ﷺ himself used to fast for days together without eating in between.

The sixth point is that, after fasting, one should always have some concern as to whether one’s fast had been accepted by Allah ﷻ or not. This should be the case with all forms of worship of Allah ﷻ.

One never knows whether some important aspect may have been left out of which no notice has taken. One should always fear that Allah ﷻ may reject one’s deeds. Rasulullah ﷺ said: “Many reciters of the Qur’aan are being cursed by the Qur’aan”.

He ﷺ also said: “On the day of Qiyamah one of those whom Allah ﷻ shall judge first shall be a martyr in the path of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ shall call him and remind him of all His favours to him which he shall admit. he shall then be asked : What have you done by way of expressing gratitude for these favours?” The martyr shall reply: “I fought in Your cause till I was martyred.” Allah ﷻ shall reply; “It is not so, You fought so that you can be called a brave man and so it has been said.” Thereafter, it shall be commanded that he be dragged face on the ground and thrown into Jahannam.” Thereafter, a religious scholar shall be called. He too, shall be reminded of Allah’s ﷻ favours and asked the same question. He shall reply: ‘O Allah! I sought to acquire knowledge, taught others and for Your sake recited the Qur’aan. Allah ﷻ shall say; “This is not true. You did all that merely so that it may be said that you are learned and so it has been said”. Then he shall be commanded that he too be dragged face on the ground and thrown into Jahannam. Thereafter, a rich man shall be called. After being reminded of Allah’s ﷻ favours and admitting them, in reply to Allah’s ﷻ question as to what he did to express his gratitude, he shall reply, “There was no worthy cause wherein I did not spend in charity for Your sake. Allah’s ﷻ reply shall be “Not true, You did all that, so that it may be said that you are very

generous and so it has been said”. Then he shall be commanded that he, too, be dragged face on the ground and thrown into Jahannam.

Many such incidents are related in Ahaadith. So, a fasting person should not only be sincere but also hope that Allah ﷻ will accept his fast.

These six points are compulsory for all truly righteous persons. As for the very pious ones, a seventh point is added. That is during fasting, the heart should not be turned towards anyone except Allah ﷻ, so much so that during the course of the fast there should be no worry as to whether these shall be something to eat for breaking the fast.

Some Mashaikh even consider it a fault to think about food for breaking the fast or that one should try to get something because this shows lack of faith in Allah’s ﷻ promise of being responsible for taking care of all our needs.

The Qur’aan commands “Fasting has been prescribed for you.” The commentators of the Qur’aan say that from this Ayah it is seen that fasting is made compulsory for every part of the body. Thus, fasting of the tongue means to avoid falsehood etc. fasting of the ears means not listening to evil, fasting of the eyes means not to look at any form of evil and sin. Similarly, fasting of the self means to be free from all bodily desires. Fasting of the heart means removing from it the love or worldly things. Fasting of the mind means avoiding thoughts about anything other than Allah ﷻ.

A single fast of Ramadhaan more valuable than a lifetime of Fasts outside Ramadhaan

Abu Hurairah ؓ reports that Rasulullah ﷺ said : “Whosoever eats during one day of Ramadhaan without a valid excuse (acceptable in Shariah) shall never be able to regain that day even by fasting for the rest of his life.”

Note: The view of some Ulama is that when anybody has without any valid excuse failed to fast any one day of Ramadhaan and has dishonoured it by eating etc. he can never make up the day of Ramadhaan which was lost even if he fasts for the rest of his life. Ali ؓ held this view. However, the vast majority of Ulama maintain that if a person did not fast for one day of Ramadhaan then to compensate he will have to fast for only one day. On the other hand if a person had started a fast in Ramadhaan and had then broken it knowingly during the day without any valid excuse, according to the Shariah he shall have to fast for sixty days one after the other with Sahoor and Iftaar. However, the full virtue and blessings as in Ramadhaan will never be obtained. This is the meaning of the above Hadith i.e. where a day of Ramadhaan had been lost without excuse, no matter how many days he fast later, he will never be able to make up the true blessings of a single day of fasting in Ramadhaan.

All this is for those who try to make up their lost days of fasting. How unfortunate and misguided are those who completely ignore the fast and do not observe it at all in Ramadhaan nor fast thereafter as Kaffaarah (compensation).

Fasting is one of the basic pillars of Islam and Rasulullah ﷺ has told us of five such pillars. First and foremost is the oneness of Allah ﷻ and the Nubuwwah of Muhammad ﷺ and thereafter the four remaining famous pillars Salaah, fasting, Zakaah and Hajj.

Ibn Abbas ؓ relates a Hadith stating: “Islam is based on three principles (1) Iman (2) Salaah (3) Fasting. Whoever fails to uphold any one of these is a disbeliever and deserves severe punishment.” As regards the later portion of this Hadith, the Ulama have said that they only become disbelievers when together with failing to uphold any principle they also deny its necessity or its being a principle.

There are those ignorant persons who do not fast but much worse is the case of those who not only refuse to fast but they make fun of the month of fasting e.g. saying in a mocking manner, “He should fast

who has no foods in his house, or “What does Allah ﷻ gain by having us suffer hunger?”

Such words should never be uttered, it should be remembered that to make fun of the smallest of our Deen can lead to Kufr (apostasy). Should any person perform not a single Salaah in his life nor fast one single day or fail to perform any Fardh obligations in Islam, he does not become a nonbeliever provided he does not deny these being necessary. Whatever obligation has not been performed shall be punished.

Anyone failing to fast in Ramadhaan without a valid excuse is disobedient to Allah ﷻ. Some scholars of Islamic law have gone so far as to state that anyone eating publicly in Ramadhaan without (valid) excuse, should be put to death.

The least to which our Iman (faith) should drive us and the minimum level of faith is to consider such actions bad at heart. I consider these ten Ahaadith sufficient in this first chapter for those who wish to follow them sincerely. As for those who have no intention to change their actions accordingly, no amount of writing will be useful, May Allah ﷻ grant me and all Muslims the strength to do righteous deeds, because we all have our failings. Aameen.

LAYLATUL QADR

Amongst the nights of Ramadhaan there is one called “Laylatul Qadr” a night that is noted for its great blessings. The Qur’aan Kareem describes it as being greater in blessedness and spiritual virtue than a thousand months which in turn means that it is greater than eighty three years and four months.

Fortunate indeed is that person who attains the full blessings of this night by spending it in Ibaadah of Allah, because he has then attained reward for Ibaadah of eighty-three years and four months and even

more indeed the granting of this night to the faithful Muslim is a great favour.

THE ORIGIN

In a Hadith reported by Anas ؓ in Durre Manthur, Rasulullah ﷺ is reported to have said, “Laylatul Qadr was granted to my Ummah and not to any other Ummah before this.” Various reasons for the granting of Laylatul Qadr have been mentioned. One reason, according to some Ahaadith is given thus: Rasulullah ﷺ used to look at the longer lives of the earlier people and was saddened over the shorter lives of his own Ummah. If His Ummah had wished to compete with the people before them in the doing of righteous deeds, because of their shorter lives it would be impossible for them to either imitate or surpass them. To compensate for this difference in their life span, Allah in His countless mercy granted them with this night of great blessing. This means that if any fortunate one of this Ummah spends during his life time ten such nights in the worship of his maker, he would have gained the reward for Ibaadah of **eight hundred and thirty years** and even more.

Another report states that Rasulullah ﷺ once related to the Sahabah the story of a very righteous man from among the Bani Israel who used to spend one thousand months in Jihad. On hearing this, the Sahabah envied that person because they could not attain the same reward whereupon Allah granted them the Night of Power as recompense.

Still another report states that our Nabi ﷺ once mentioned the names of the four most pious people from among the Bani Israel who each spent eighty years in Allah’s ﷻ sincere service, worshipping Him, and not sinning in the least. They were Nabi Ayyub ؑ, Zakariyya ؑ, Hizqeel ؑ and Yushaa ؑ. The Sahabahs heard this with astonishment. Then Jibraeel ؑ appeared and recited Surah Qadr, wherein the blessings of this night were revealed.

This is a great favour and gift of Allah. To devote yourself on this night is also a blessing from Allah. How worthy of envy are those Pious Saints who say they did not miss the Ibaadah of one Laylatul Qadr since they became of age. Now, as to which night it is, here again approximately fifty different views of the Ulama are mentioned. The numerous benefits of this night are mentioned in various books of Hadith. The Qur'aan Majeed itself mentions the night, we shall begin with a short commentary on Surah Qadr.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾

(In the name of Allah the beneficent, the Merciful, We have indeed revealed this (message) in the night of Power (Suratul Qadr)

On this special night, the Qur'aan was sent down from Al Lowhul Mahfuz (The preserved Tablet) to the heavens above the earth. A great book like the Qur'aan was revealed in this night is in itself sufficient to explain its excellence, needless to mention all its other blessings and virtues. In the very next verse by way of drawing and increasing our interest in the matter under discussion, a question is asked.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾

And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is? In other words, the question asked here is: Have you any knowledge as to the greatness and the great importance of this night? Have you any knowledge as to the great favours and bounties that are placed in it? The next verse proceeds to list some of that greatness:

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾

The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. (Suratul Qadr: 3)

The true meaning here is that reward for spending this night in Ibaadah is more better than having spent one thousand months of Ibaadah, it is infact more, but as to how much more rewarding it is, we are not told here.

تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

Therein come down the Angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission on every task

A good explanation is given on this verse by Imaam Raazi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ. Commenting on this verse he explains that when man first appeared on earth, created by Allah as His vicegerent on earth, the Malaaikeh looked at man with scorn. When Allah ﷻ informed them of His intention of placing man on earth, they even went further to ask, Will you place in this earth one who shall commit evil therein and shed blood?

On this Night of Power we see that same man worshipping Allah and loving Him, those very same Malaaikeh who had before looked down on him with scorn, descend towards him, clearly sorry for the thoughts they had against him.

In this verse mention is made.... "and the spirit". Reference is clearly to Jibraeel عليه السلام. Commentators of the Qur'aan have given various descriptions of this word. The view we wish to mention here is that "Spirit" means Allah's special mercy which comes when the angels descend.

Imaam Bayhaqi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ reports a Hadith by Anas رضي الله عنه wherein Rasulullah ﷺ is reported to have said, "On Laylatul Qadr, Jibraeel

ﷺ comes down with a group of angels and makes Dua of mercy for every one whom they find busy in Ibaadah.”

This same verse under discussion says, “*By Allah’s permission on every task....*”

The Author of Mazhaarre Haq writes that on this night ages ago the Malaaikeh were created. On this night long ago the creation on Adam ﷺ begun as the matter from which he was created had been gathered on this night. Trees were planted in Jannah and large number of Ahaadith bear witness to the fact that on this night Dua’s are granted.

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

Peace be until the break of dawn (Suratul Qadr: 5)

Yes, this is the very image of peace. Throughout its hours the Malaaikeh recite Salaam upon faithful believers adoring their Lord. As one group descends another ascends as is explained in the Ahaadith. Another interpretation is that it is a night of complete safety from evil and mischief.

These blessings remain throughout the night until the break of dawn and are not limited to any particular hour. And now having noted a few virtues of this night as explained in the words of Allah ﷻ, we now turn to the Hadith where we read more about the virtues of the night.

All Sins Forgiven on Worshipping during this Night

Abu Hurairah ؓ reports Rasulullah ﷺ said, “Whoever stands in prayer and Ibaadah on the night of Power with sincere faith and with sincere hope of gaining reward, his previous sins are forgiven (Targheeb from Bukhari and Muslim)

COMMENTARY

In the above Hadith “standing” refers to Salaah as well as any other form of Ibaadah, for example Zikr, Tilaawah etc. The phrase ...with sincere hope of gaining reward means that one should be sincerely occupied with Ibaadah only for the pleasure of Allah and to receive reward from Him. This should not be done for others to see, or to deceive them. According to Khataabi, it means that one should have complete faith in the promise that any deed shall be rewarded and thus one must stand before Allah with seriousness and eagerness. Neither should one think of this Ibaadah as a burden nor should there be any doubt about the reward which will be granted.

It will be noted that the Hadith speaks about previous sins being forgiven. The Ulama have said that this forgiveness is mentioned in the above Hadith and other Ahaadith, refers only to minor sins. Major sins can only be forgiven, according to the Qur’aan after sincere repentance, with the promise never to return to such sins again. This is the reason why the Ulama have agreed that major sins are not forgiven except by sincere repentance. Hence, whenever, forgiveness of sins mentioned in the Ahaadith the Ulama specify it to be minor sins.

My late father (May Allah bless him and grant him light in his resting place) used to say that the word ‘minor’ has been left out, because a true Muslim is one on whom there should be no major sins. Whenever a major sin has been committed, he will never rest or find peace until he has sincerely repented and begged Allah for forgiveness and promised not to do the same in future.

When a night like Laylatul Qadr comes along, one who has committed major sins should first of all ask for repentance with a heart full of sincere longing for forgiveness, so that Allah in His infinite mercy may forgive all forms of sins and when you do, remember me too in your Dua’s (The publishers and myself request the same).

To be deprived of Laylatul Qadr is to be deprived of all good.

Anas رضي الله عنه reports: “Once when Ramadhāan began, the Rasulullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said:” A month has verily come upon you, wherein lies a night better than a thousand months. Whoever misses such a night has indeed been deprived of all that is good and none is deprived of it, except he who is really unfortunate.”

Note: Who can have any doubt as to the misfortune of the person who is either deprived or deprives himself of the great good of Laylatul Qadr? There are those who, during their service and terms of employment, have to stay awake by night throughout the year. How easy should it be for the sake of gaining the reward of over eighty years of worship of Allāh عز وجل to stay awake for one month in Allāh عز وجل service?

Because of lack of interest there is no desire in the heart. If that were present then even a thousand nights in worship of Allāh عز وجل would become exceedingly easy. It is this urge and desire that we must create. Our Nabi صلى الله عليه وسلم had been promised time and again that he had nothing to fear in the Akhirah (Hereafter) and had been given good news as to his high position. Yet night after night he was seen in worship of Allāh عز وجل so much so that his feet became swollen. Among the believers of Islam, there are many saintly followers who copied his example. They were human beings like us and none can thus say that it is impossible for us to have that same desire for worship, it is really a matter of taking this to heart. Let us look at the example of the following famous sons of Islam. Once such man was Umar رضي الله عنه who having performed his Isha Salaah would return home and then remain in Salaah throughout the night until the Adhaan was heard for Fajr. Then there is the example of Usman رضي الله عنه who, after fasting the whole day used to spend the whole night in Salaah apart from getting a little sleep during the first third of the night. It is well known about him that he used to recite the whole Qur’aan during one Rakaah at a time.

Ibrahim Ibn Adham went so far as not to sleep at all in Ramadhāan, night or Day. Imam al-Shaafi used to recite the Qur’aan about sixty times during the days and nights of Ramadhāan. And apart from these, there were countless other pious souls who used to act carefully on the order of the Qur’aanic Ayah “I have created the Jinn and Humans that they may only serve Me”. (Al-Zaariyat 56). These are some examples of those who lived in earlier times. Even in these times of carelessness there are people who truly try to follow the example of Rasulullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and do not let their worldly activities or their physical comfort stand in their way for Allāh’s عز وجل worship. The Rasulullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Allāh عز وجل says: “O son of Adam spend your time in My service and I shall bless you with freedom from want and I shall remove your poverty. Otherwise, I shall load you with many activities and duties, while your poverty and needs shall not decrease.” How often we observe the truth of this. Some people serve only Allāh عز وجل while having no means of livelihood and yet they need nothing.

Descent of the Angels

Anas رضي الله عنه reports that Rasulullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “On Laylatul Qadr, the Angel Jibraeel عليه السلام descends upon the earth with a group of Angels making Dua for blessings for every servant of Allāh عز وجل whom they see in worship, standing or sitting and engaged in Allāh’s عز وجل praise. Then on the day of Eid Allāh عز وجل boasts about them to the Angels (who had been critical at the time of Adam’s عليه السلام creation), ‘O My Angels, what is the reward of that worker who had done his job very well?’ The reply: ‘O our Sustainer, his reward should be given to him in full.’ To this Allāh عز وجل replies, O’ My Angels, verily My servants, the males among them as well as females, have today duly performed their compulsory duty, thereafter they set forth to place for Eid Salaah raising their voices in Dua to Me. I swear by My Honour, by My Greatness by My Grace and by My High Position, that I shall surely answer the Dua’s of these people. ‘Thereafter, Allāh عز وجل addresses the people: ‘Go forth, I have forgiven your sins and have

replaced your evil deeds with righteous ones.’ These people then return from the place for Eid Salaah in such a condition that their sins stand forgiven.”

Note: In this Hadith, it is clearly stated that Jibraeel عليه السلام comes down with the Angels. Another Hadith reported by Ibn Abbas and quoted by Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani رحمته الله عليه in his book Ghunyah further explain the contents of this Hadith.

It is reported that Jibraeel عليه السلام, after his descent, commands the Angels to go to the house of everyone busy with worship of Allah ﷻ and greet him by shaking his hands. There upon the Angels spread forth, visiting every House, whether large or small, whether in the Jungle or on a ship, wherein a believer lives to shake his hands. However, certain houses are not entered: The house wherein a dog or pig is found, the house wherein there is someone who has committed adultery and is still unclean because he has not even taken a bath after it and the house wherein pictures (images) of men and animals are displayed.

How unfortunate that Muslims houses should be deprived of the blessed entry of Angels simply because there are pictures of men and animals being displayed, solely for the sake of decoration. A single picture may have been hung by some member of the Household, as a result of which the complete household is deprived of these blessings.

When to look for Laylatul Qadr?

Aa’isha رضي الله عنها reports that Rasulullah ﷺ said “Seek Laylatul Qadr among the odd numbered nights of the last ten days of the month of Ramadhān”.

Note: According to the great majority of the religious scholars, the last ten nights commence on the 21st night. Such is the case whether the month of Ramadhān consists of 29 days or 30. So, one should seek Laylatul Qadr on the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th night.

Ibn Hazm has a different opinion saying that the word Asharah used in the Hadith means ten. As such, the above calculations will only be correct in cases where the month of Ramadhān consists of thirty days. However, when there are only twenty nine days in the month (as often happens), the last ten days will commence with the 19th day and the night being the 20th night. According to this calculation, it would appear that the unevenly numbered nights will actually be the 20th, 22nd, 24th, 26th, 28th and 30th nights.

But all Ulama agree that when in search of Laylatul Qadr Rasulullah ﷺ went into Itikaaf, he commenced it on the 21st night of Ramadhān. In view of this, these Ulama consider the odd nights to be the appropriate nights for Laylatul Qadr.

One should, therefore, spend each and every night from the 20th onwards in worship of Allah, so that one may be sure of having got the Barakah of Ramadhān, Spending ten or eleven nights in devotion is definitely not so difficult, if one looks at the great reward that is promised.

Exact Knowledge of Laylatul Qadr was taken away

Ubaadah Ibn Saamit رضي الله عنه said “Once the Nabi ﷺ came out to inform us of the (correct date of) Laylatul Qadr. Unfortunately, a quarrel took place between two Muslims, whereupon He ﷺ said ‘I came out to inform you as to when Laylatul Qadr occurs, but because two people quarrelled with each other, the knowledge of the correct date was taken away. Perhaps that is better for you. So, seek it among the ninth, seventh and fifth nights.”

Note: Three important points are referred to in this Hadith. Firstly it tells us of a quarrel, as a result of which the knowledge of the precise night of Laylatul Qadr was lost to us. Arguments and quarrels are always the cause of loss of blessings.

Once Rasulullah ﷺ asked the Sahabah: “Shall I inform you of an action that is better than Salaah, fasting and charity?” The Sahabah replied: “Certainly.” Rasulullah ﷺ then said: “Maintain peaceful and good relations amongst yourselves, for verily quarrels among yourselves destroy (shave off) faith,” i.e. just as a razor shaves off the hair, so does quarrelling affect the Deen.

Let alone the worldly people, even those among us who appear very religious and busy with Zikr are victims of these arguments and fighting and are stubborn in their stand, inspite of the saying of Nabi ﷺ. In the first chapter of this book, we read how Rasulullah ﷺ said that to insult a Muslim is indeed a serious crime and equivalent to the worst kind of interest, but we do not even spare a Muslim’s honour or refrain from insults and little notice is taken of the orders of Allah ﷻ and His Rasul ﷺ.

The Qur’aan says: “And argue not among yourselves, otherwise you will lose courage and your strength will depart” (al-Anfaal 46). It is now the duty of those who always seek to injure and destroy the honour and dignity of others to ponder and reflect how much harm they have, in fact, done to themselves, and think how much they have, through these wicked deeds, ruined themselves in Allah’s ﷻ sight and in the sight of those around them.

Rasulullah ﷺ said that he who breaks off relations with a Muslim brother for more than three days and dies in this state, will go straight to Jahannam. In another Hadith, it is stated that on every Monday and Thursday, the actions of human beings are brought before Allah ﷻ. Then through His mercy (as a result of certain good deeds), forgiveness is granted, except to the idolaters and those who set up equals to Allah ﷻ. However, regarding those two people between whom a quarrel has taken place, friendship having been cut off, it shall be said, “Leave their affair aside until such time as they become friends.”

Another Hadith states that, when actions are produced before Allah

ﷻ every Monday and Thursday, repentance is accepted from those who repent and forgiveness is granted to those who seek pardon. As for those who had arguments (with each other) they are left as they were.

A Hadith further teaches us that, on the night of Shabe Baraat, the 15th night of Shabaan the mercy of Allah ﷻ is directed at all Allah’s ﷻ creation and forgiveness is freely granted, except for two persons: One, a nonbeliever and the other, who has evil thoughts about others.

In another Hadith it is stated: “There are three people whose Salaah does not lift even a span above their heads.” Listed among these are those who quarrel among themselves.

The second point to which the Hadith under discussion draws attention is the fact that man should be satisfied and accept Allah’s ﷻ ruling in all matters. For example, even though it seems that the loss of the knowledge as to when Laylatul Qadr actually falls is a great loss, yet it has to be accepted because it is from Allah ﷻ. Because of this, Rasulullah ﷺ said. “It is better for us that way.” One should ponder over this, Allah ﷻ is at all times Merciful to His slaves. Even when someone becomes overtaken by a great punishment because of his own evil deeds, he only needs appeal to His Creator, admit his own evil deeds, admit his own weakness and that same punishment is made the cause for greater good. Nothing is impossible for Allah ﷻ

Our Ulama have pointed out quite a few advantages in our not knowing the exact date for Laylatul Qadr. First, had we known the actual date of this blessed night, there would have been many who would not have worshipped Allah ﷻ at all during the other nights. As things are, one has to stay awake and be in worship of Allah ﷻ for quite a number of nights, hoping that each night is perhaps the night. This means spending more nights in Allah’s ﷻ worship and getting reward for these.

Secondly, there are among us those who are just not able to avoid evil. How extremely dangerous and unfortunate for them would it be, when, in spite of knowing that such and such a night is Laylatul Qadr, they might still spend it in sin and evil? Once the Nabi ﷺ on entering the Musjid, saw one of the Sahabah sleeping, He ﷺ said to Ali ؓ “Wake him up so that he can make Wudu”. Ali ؓ obeyed and asked the Nabi ﷺ thus: “O Rasul of Allah ﷺ you are always the first to hasten towards any good deed. Why then did you not wake him up yourself?” To this the Nabi ﷺ replied: “I feared that this man may refuse and refusal to my command is Kufr, Denial of Deen. If he had refused your command, it would not be Kufr.”

Similarly, Allah ﷻ in His mercy, does not wish that, in spite of knowing which night is the real one, a Muslim should still spend it in sin and evil.

Thirdly, if we did know and in spite of that, for one reason or another, within or outside our control, we allowed that night to go by without worship of Allah ﷻ then it is very likely that thereafter, for the rest of Ramadhaan, no other night would have been spent in worship, whereas now many people find it possible to spend one, two or three nights in worship of Allah ﷻ because we do not know which is Laylatul Qadr.

Fourthly, every night spent in worship of Allah ﷻ in search of Laylatul Qadr is a night for which a separate reward is promised.

Fifthly, we have read that Allah ﷻ speaks highly to His Angels about those believers who exert themselves in worship of Allah ﷻ during Ramadhaan, now more such occasions of receiving Allah’s ﷻ appreciation arise. In spite of not knowing when the real night of Laylatul Qadr is and although they have only a vague idea about its fixed time, they still exert themselves to the utmost in Allah’s ﷻ service, night after night. If such then is their exertion when Laylatul Qadr is not known, how much more will they exert themselves were it made known to them.

The third point to which attention is drawn in the Hadith is the fact that Laylatul Qadr should be sought among three nights: The ninth, seventh and fifth. By reading this together with the other Ahaadith, we come to know that this refers to the last ten nights of Ramadhaan. So to determine which nights are these, if we start from the 20th, counting upwards, then these three nights are the 25th, 27th and 29th. If, on the other hand, we start counting from the 29th backwards (where Ramadhaan has 29 days) these nights would be the 21st, 23rd and 25th, but if Ramadhaan has 30 days, then these would be the 22nd, 24th and 26th nights.

From the above, one can see how much uncertainty there is about the correct date, in fact, among the learned Ulama, there are approximately fifty different opinions. Because of this, some Ulama have said Laylatul Qadr does not fall on one and the same night every year. If in this particular year, it falls on a particular night, then the following year it will fall on another night.

There are times when the Nabi ﷺ commanded the Sahabah to search among a number of nights, whereas at other times he used to fix a certain night.

Abu Hurairah ؓ reports that once during a conversation with the Sahabah, someone spoke of Laylatul Qadr. Rasulullah ﷺ asked: “What is the date to day?” They replied: “The 22nd of Ramadhaan.” The Nabi ﷺ said: “Search for Laylatul Qadr in the night following this day.”

Abu Zarr ؓ reports, “I inquired of the Nabi ﷺ whether Laylatul Qadr was only granted during the lifetime of Rasulullah ﷺ or whether it would continue to come after him, Rasulullah ﷺ replied: It will continue until the day of Qiyamah.’ I then inquired in which section of Ramadhaan does it come? The Nabi ﷺ replied, ‘Search for it in the first ten and in the last tens days.’ “Thereafter the Nabi ﷺ became busy with other work. I waited and finding another chance inquired: ‘In which section of those ten days Laylatul Qadr comes?’

Upon this, Rasulullah ﷺ became angry with me, as He ﷺ had never been before and said “If it had been Allah’s ﷻ wish to make it known, would He not have informed us? Search for it among the last seven nights, and ask no more.”

In another Hadith again, Rasulullah ﷺ is reported to have told one Sahabi that Laylatul Qadr was on the 23rd night. Ibn Abbas ؓ related: “While sleeping once, someone said to me in my dream: ‘Rise up, this is Laylatul Qadr,’ I woke up and proceeded in haste to Rasulullah ﷺ and I found him in Salaah. That was the 23rd night.” According to other reports again, the 24th was Laylatul Qadr. Abdullah Ibn Masood ؓ said: “Whoever remains all the nights of the year in worship of Allah ﷻ can find Laylatul Qadr. (In other words, the blessed night moves throughout the year and does not necessarily have to come in Ramadhan only).

When this was related to Ubay Ibn Kaab ؓ he said: “Yes, Ibn Masood’s meaning is that people may not stay awake just on this night and become contented.” Thereafter he swore by Allah ﷻ that Laylatul Qadr comes on the 27th. This is also the view held by numerous Sahabah as well as Taabiees.

The vast majority of the Ulama, also consider it most likely that Laylatul Qadr comes annually on the 27th (of Ramadhan).

Thus, if by good fortune one is blessed with finding the night, then it would outweigh all comforts and enjoyable things in the world. Even if one fails to get the much searched for night, then at least the reward for the worship is received. At the least efforts should be made that the Salaah of Maghrib and Isha throughout the year is performed with Jamaah because if it is Laylatul Qadr the reward for both is so much more.

Signs of Laylatul Qadr

Ubadah Ibn Saamit ؓ reports that he asked Rasulullah ﷺ about Laylatul Qadr, He ﷺ replied “It is in Ramadhan, during the last ten days on the odd numbered nights, either 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th or the last night of Ramadhan. Whosoever stands in worship of Allah ﷻ on this night with sincere faith and with genuine hopes of gaining reward, his previous sins will be forgiven. Among the signs of this night is that it is a serene, quiet, shining night, neither hot, nor cold but moderate as if a moon is shining clear and no meteors are shot at the Shayateen on that night. It lasts until the break of the dawn. Another sign is that the sun rises without any radiant beams of light, appearing rather like the moon in its fullness. On that day, Allah ﷻ prohibits the Shayateen from rising up with the sun.”

Note: Part of what has been stated in this Hadith has already been dealt with. Some signs are here related about the actual night. These signs are clear and need no further explanation. Apart from these, there are other signs too, as stated in Ahaadith or in the experiences of those who had the good fortune to experience Laylatul Qadr.

The sign that is, however, most specific in the Hadith is the rising of the sun, without any radiant beams of light. Other signs are not always there. One Sahabi Abdah bin Abi Lubaaba ؓ says: “On the evening of the 27th, I tasted the water of the sea and it was sweet.” Ayyoob Ibn Khalid said: “I once had to bath myself with sea water and on tasting it, found it sweet. This was on the 23rd night.”

Some of the Mashaikh wrote that on the evening of Laylatul Qadr, everything does Sajdah before Allah ﷻ, so much so that trees fall flat on the ground, then return to their normal position, there are, however, spiritual phenomena not visible to the ordinary person.

What Dua one should make in Laylatul Qadr

Aa'isha رضى الله عنها reports "I said 'O Rasul of Allah ﷺ, should I find myself the Laylatul Qadr, what shall I ask of Allah ﷻ? Rasulallah ﷺ replied, "Say, 'O Allah, You are the One who grants pardon for sins, You love to pardon, so pardon me.'" (Reported by Ahmad, Ibn Majah and Tirmidhi)

Note: This is indeed such an all-inclusive Dua, wherein one begs that Allah ﷻ in His infinite Kindness should forgive our sins. If that has been obtained, the path to the Akhirah (Hereafter) is secure. What more would one require? Imam Sufyan al-Thawree رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ use to say that to keep oneself busy on this night with Dua is better than any other form of worship of Allah.

Ibn Rajab رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ says that one should not only remain busy with Dua but should also take part in all other forms of worship of Allah ﷻ, e.g. recitation of the Qur'aan, Salaah, meditation etc. This latter opinion is most correct and nearer to what Rasulallah ﷺ has said, as already stated in the previous Ahaadith.

I'TIKAAF

HADITH NO. 1

"Abu Sa'iyd Khudr رضى الله عنه reports that Rasulallah ﷺ once performed I'tikaaf for the first ten days of Ramadhan. Thereafter, he made I'tikaaf in a Turkish tent (inside the Masjid) for the middle ten days. Thereafter, he raised his head out of the tent and said, "Verily, in search of Laylatul Qadr did I perform I'tikaaf for the first ten days, then for the middle ten days. Then someone (an angel) came and told me, "It is in the last ten days whosoever has made I'tikaaf with me should continue for the last ten days". I had indeed been shown that night and then made to forget, which it shall be. And verily did I see myself prostrating to Allah with my forehead on mud on the morning after the night. Seek Laylatul Qadr in the last ten nights of Ramadhan; seek it among odd ones".

Abu Sa'iyd رضى الله عنه says; "That same night it rained. The roof on the Masjid leaked, and I looked at Rasulallah's ﷺ on his eyes and forehead were remains of water and mud. This was on the morning of the 21st after performing sujood in muddy clay". (Reported in Mishkaat.)

COMMENTARY

It used to be the general practice of Rasulallah ﷺ to perform I'tikaaf in Ramadhan. At times he used to remain in the masjid for the whole month and during the last year of his life he was in I'tikaaf for twenty days. Because he always secluded himself in the masjid for last ten days, the 'Ulama consider it sunnah mu'akkadah to perform I'tikaaf for that period.

From the above Hadith it can be understood that the major object behind I'tikaaf was to search for Laylatul Qadr. What better manner can there be than to be in I'tikaaf, because one is considered to be in II'baadah all the time, whether one is awake or asleep.

Furthermore, one in I'tikaaf is free from all daily tasks and thus has all the time to devote to thikrullah, (the remembrance of Allah) and meditation. Throughout Ramadhaan Rasullullah ﷺ exerted himself and increased his I'baadah and when the last ten days came along, he had no limit in exerting himself. He himself remained awake throughout the night and awakened his family for the same purpose.

Aa'isha رضي الله عنها reports:

“During Ramadhaan Rasullullah ﷺ tied his lungi tightly about him, staying awake all night and waking his family (for the purpose of I'baadah). ‘Tied his lungi tightly about him’ means either that he knew no limits in exerting himself in I'baadah; or that he gave due importance and preference to I'baadah, and avoided all forms of relations.

HADITH NO.2

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه relates that Rasullullah ﷺ said, “The person performing I'tikaaf remains free from sins, and he is indeed given the same reward as those who do righteous deeds inspite of not having done those deeds as a result of having been secluded in the masjid”. (Reported in Mishkaat from ibn Majah.)

COMMENTARY

Note: One remaining secluded in the Masjid is not allowed to leave from there for his worldly needs He may only set forth to the outside for the calls of nature or to perform wudhu or ghusl or for attending Jumuah when that is not performed in the same Masjid, after which he must return forthwith. This Hadith points to two great benefits of I'tikaaf.

Firstly one is saved from sin. It is true that it very often happens that one falls into sin without ever intending to do so. (The world all around us is full of temptations). To commit sin in the blessed

month of Ramadhaan is indeed a great injustice to ourselves. By remaining secluded in the masjid, one completely avoids the temptation to sin. Secondly, it would appear outwardly that when one is secluded in the masjid, one is automatically at a disadvantage by not being allowed to perform certain good deeds like joining funeral prayers, attending burials, visiting the sick, etc. That is not so, because according to this Hadith one is rewarded for these deeds even though not performing them. What a great favour from Allah! How great is Allah's bounty! By performing I'baadah one receives the reward of numerous other I'baadaat. In fact Allah ﷻ seeks the slightest excuse to bestow His blessings. His blessings could be received in abundance with a little effort and plea. If only we can understand and properly appreciate these favours. That proper appreciation and understanding can only enter our minds when we have the true love and interest for our Deen. May Allah grant us that Aameen.

The Last Night of Ramadhaan

Ibn Abaas ؓ says, that he heard our Nabi ﷺ say, “Verily Jannah becomes perfumed with the sweetest fragrance in Ramadhaan. From the beginning of the year till the end, it is being brightly decorated for the coming of this blessed month. And when the first night of Ramadhaan appears, a wind blows from beneath the Arsh (Throne). It is called Mutheerah, and causes the leaves of the trees of Jannah to rustle and door handles to sound, where by setting forth such a beautiful sound as had never been heard before. The dark eyed damsels of Jannah then step forth till they appear in the centre of the balconies of Jannah, exclaiming: “Is there anyone making Dua to Allah ﷻ for us that Allah may join us in marriage to him?” Then these damsels call out: “O Ridhwaan, keeper of Jannah, what night is this?” He replies: “Labbaik, this is indeed the first night of Ramadhaan, when the doors of Jannah are opened to those who observe the fast from among the ummah of Muhammad ﷺ”. Rasulallah ﷺ further said, Allah says, “O Ridhwaan open the doors of Jannah, and O Maalik, (keeper of Jahannam) close the doors of Jahannam for those who fast from among the ummah of Ahmad ﷺ,” “O Jibraeel proceed down to the earth and tie the evil shaytaans, put them in chains and cast them in the oceans so that they make no mischief, thereby spoiling the fast of the ummah of My beloved Muhammad ﷺ

Allah commands a caller from the heavens to call out three times on every one of the nights of Ramadhaan: “Is there anyone begging of Me that I may grant him his desire? Is there anyone repenting to me that I may turn in mercy to him? Is there anyone begging for forgiveness that I may forgive him? Who is there who shall give a loan to the One whose wealth does not become less and the One who fulfils without injustice”.

Rasulallah ﷺ said further, “Every day at the time of iftaar Allah ﷻ sets free one million souls from the fire of Jahannam, all of whom

had already earned entrance into Jahannam. On the last night He sets free as many as had been set free throughout the month. On the night of Laylatul Qadr Allah ﷻ commands Jibraeel ؑ. To descend to the earth with the group of Malaa’ikah (angels). They descend carrying a green flag which is then planted on top of the Kabah. Jibraeel ؑ himself has one hundred wings, two of which are only spread out on this night. He spreads out these wings so that their width extends from East to West. Jibraeel ؑ, then sends out the Malaa’ikah on this night in all directions to recite salaam upon each and everybody they find in prayer or sitting, performing salaah and praising of Allah. They shake hands with them and say ‘Aameen’ to all their duas until dawn breaks. When dawn comes Jibraeel ؑ calls out; Re Leave O Malaa’ikah of Allah Leave”.

The Malaa’ikah then inquire: “O Jibraeel but what did Allah ﷻ do regarding the needs of the faithful ones from among the ummah of Ahmad ﷺ put before Him? Jibraeel ؑ replies: “Allah looked at them with mercy and forgave them all except four kinds of people”.

There upon we the Sahaabah inquired: “Who are they, O Rasulallah ﷺ?” Rasulallah ﷺ replied, “They are the ones addicted to wine drinking, those disobedient to their parents, those who cut themselves from their near relatives and the Mushaahin”. We inquired, “O Rasulallah ﷺ who is a Mushaahin?” He said: Those who harbour ill-feelings in their hearts against their fellow brethren and break off relations with them”.

Then night of I’ydul Fitr, the night that is called Laylatul Jaa’izah, (The night of prize giving), comes along. On the morning of I’yd Allah sends down the Malaa’ikah to all the lands of the earth where they take their positions at the entrance points of roads, calling out with a voice that is heard by all except man and jinn.

“O Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ, come forth from your houses towards a Lord that is noble and gracious, who grants much and pardons the major sins”. When they proceed towards the places for

their I'yd salaah, Allah says to the Malaa'ikah: "What indeed is the reward of that worker who has completed his work?" The Malaa'ikah replies, "O Lord and master, it is only right that he should receive his reward in full for his services". Allah then says, "I call you to witness, O My Malaa'ikah, that for their having fasted during the month of Ramadhaan, and for their having stood before Me in prayer by night, I have granted to them as reward My pleasure and have granted them forgiveness. O My servants ask now of Me, for I swear by My honour and My greatness, that whatsoever you shall beg of Me this day in this assembly of yours for the needs of the Hereafter, I shall grant you; and whatsoever you shall ask for worldly needs, I shall look at you favourably. By My honour I swear, as long as you shall obey My commands, I shall cover your faults. By My Honour and My Greatness do I swear that I shall never disgrace you among the evil-doing ones and disbelievers. Depart now from here, you are forgiven. You have pleased Me and I am pleased with you.

The Malaa'ikah on seeing this great reward bestowed by Allah upon the ummah of Muhammad ﷺ on the day of I'ydul Fitr become greatly pleased and happy". (As reported in Targheeb.)

"O Allah, make us also of those fortunate ones, Aameen".

COMMENTARY

The previous pages of this book already covered almost all that is contained in this last long Hadith. A few points need attention. We see here that there are a few people who are deprived of forgiveness in Ramadhaan and are unfortunate indeed in not being able to share the great gifts of Allah on the morning of I'yd. Among them are those who fight and argue among themselves and those disobedient to their parents. Let us put one question to them: "You have displeased Allah ﷻ and having done so, what other refuge do you have besides Allah?" We feel indeed sad that for some reason or other you have made yourselves the target for the curse of Allah, His Rasool ﷺ and

Jibraeel ﷺ while at the same time you have been excluded from Allah ﷻ freely granted forgiveness. Who else can grant you refuge? Who and what can stand by your side when you carry the curse of Rasulullah ﷺ who can help you when Allah's close angel Jibraeel ﷺ has made dua against you? While Allah is excluding you for His forgiveness and mercy. I implore you my dear brother and sister think about your position at this moment. Think and give up from all that draws you away from Allah ﷻ. There is time to change and repent and now is that time. Tomorrow you shall have to stand before a Judge before whom no rank, honour, position and wealth shall benefit you. A Judge before whom only actions shall count and Who is indeed aware of our every movement. Remember that Allah ﷻ may forgive our faults as far as our relationship with Him is concerned, but will not forgive without punishment our faults in our relations with our fellowmen.

Rasulullah ﷺ said, "The bankrupt one from among my Ummah is that person, who shall appear on the day of Qiyaamah, bringing with him righteous deeds like salaah, sown (fast) and charity. However he had also sworn at someone, falsely accused someone else and hurt someone, with the result that all these people shall come forward with their action against him, bearing witness against him. As a penalty, his good deeds shall be taken away and granted to the afflicted ones. When his good deeds shall come to an end, in this manner, their sins shall be thrown upon him (when he is not able to pay the full penalty through lack of good deeds). Hence, in this manner he shall enter Jahannam. So we see inspite of many good deeds his regret and sorry state is beyond description. (O Allah save us from that).

Another point is worth stressing in this connection. Many times we have read about so many occasions and deeds which become the reason for forgiveness. The question now arises that when forgiveness is being granted why should it be granted time and again? In other words, once a person had been forgiven there are no sins left on him. So why is forgiveness granted again? The answer is

that when forgiveness comes to a person with sins on him, it will mean those sins are wiped off but when he has no sin it will mean that mercy and favour is granted to him. A further interesting point to note is that Allah time and again calls the Mala'ikah to witness. The question may arise why is that so? Here one should bear in mind that the affairs of Qiyaamah at the time of reckoning have been set, so that a witness shall be brought forward to testify. Hence Ambiya ﷺ shall be required to bring witnesses as to whether they had delivered the message. Very often our Nabi ﷺ used to say, "Verily you shall be asked about me (and my mission). So bear witness that I did deliver the message."

The last Hadith under discussion also brings out one joyous message to the fortunate ones. Allah ﷻ says that He shall not disgrace and humiliate those who performed their duties in front of (and among) the unbelievers and evil doers. This is the great extent of Allah's grace and kindness and also the regard Allah shows for the status of the Muslims. In addition for those who sought Allah's pleasure another of His blessing and favour is that their faults and sins on this occasion will also be covered.

Abdullah ibn Umar ؓ reports that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "On the day of Qiyaamah Allah shall call a believer to draw near to Him. A curtain shall be drawn so that none may see. Allah shall then remind him of each and every fault of his which he shall be obliged to admit. Seeing the great amount of his faults, that person shall feel that he had indeed failed and shall perish. But then Allah say: "In the world did I cover your faults and today too do I hide them and forgive them for you". Thereafter his book of good deeds shall be given to him.

The contents of this Hadith is contained in many other Ahaadith as well. One should therefore be careful of not humiliating and attacking the righteous ones for their faults, because it is possible that their faults are forgiven. It is also possible that we may be the real loser through backbiting and jeering at those who in their own manner seek to please Allah. It is possible that Allah may cover their

faults and forgive them through the blessings of their other good deeds, while we continue to backbite, scoff and jeer at them, may be the cause of our own destruction. (May Allah in His Mercy pardon us all).

This Hadith also states that the night before the day of Eid is called the night of prize giving, the night when Allah gives the true reward. This night too should be properly appreciated. It is also common that once the announcement has been made that tomorrow is I'yd, majority of us even the pious, on this night enjoy ourselves in sleep, whereas this too is a night that should be spent in I'baadah, Rasulullah ﷺ said, "Whoever remains awake (for I'baadah) on the nights preceding both I'yd's with the aim of gaining reward, his heart shall not die on that day when hearts shall die". The meaning here is that at the time when evil will have taken possession of all, his heart shall stay alive (guarded against evil). It may also refer to the time when the bugle shall be blown to herald the day of Qiyaamah. On that day his soul shall not become unconscious.

Rasulullah ﷺ is also reported to have said, "Whoever stays awake for I'ibaadah on the following five nights, entrance into Jannah becomes waajib for him, Laylatul Tar-wiyah: (the night preceding the eight of Zil Hijjah), Laylatul Arafah (the night preceding the ninth Zil Hijjah), Laylatul Nahr (the night preceding the tenth Zil Hijjah), the night preceding I'ydul Fitr and the night preceding the fifteenth of Shabaan.

The Ulama have written that it is mustahab to remain in I'baadah on the nights preceding I'yd. It is reported in Maathabata bisunnah from Imaam Shafi رحمه الله عليه that there are five nights in which duas are accepted; The night preceding Friday, the night preceding both I'yds, the first night of Rajab, and Laylatul Bara-a'h (fifteenth of Shabaan).

Ramadhaan the month of virtues

Among the pious in Islaam, it is said that because of the exceptional greatness of Friday night, one should spend this night in I'baadah during the month of Ramadhaan. But there are some Ahaadith wherein we have been prohibited from fixing only that night for I'baadah, it is best that one or two other nights should be joined with it.

I have now come to the end of this book, in conclusion, hoping that this shall be of benefit to those who seek Allah's pleasure. I beg and implore all readers to make dua for me, the humble writer of these pages, during those special hours of Ramadhaan. It is possible that because of your duas Allah ﷻ bestows His happiness and love upon me too, Aameen.