

FRIDAY SERMON

01 April 2022

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The moment for the new moon of Ramadan 2022 was at 10:24 AM today 1st April (Mauritian time). According to the experts in these matters, the new moon might be visible in some parts of the western hemisphere today. But it will be visible to the naked eye in most parts of the world tomorrow insha Allah. Hence, weather permitting, we will insha Allah start fasting on Sunday 3rd April. Here in Mauritius, Sehri time will be around 5:03 a.m in the beginning and in the end, it will be at 5:10 a.m. Iftar time will be at 6:11 p.m in the beginning and in the end, it will be at 5:49 p.m. This means that we will start fasting for 13 hours and 8 minutes in the beginning and we will end up with 12 hours and 39 minutes. In some other places in the world, Muslims will be fasting far longer than us and in some other countries, they will fast less than we do. Let us hope and pray that Allah grants each one among us the *tawfiq*, an Arabic word which we roughly translate as opportunity, to fast and pray and do as much good deeds as we can throughout the blessed month of Ramadan that is coming. Ameen.

In the Holy Quran, Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

Translation:

“O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous.”

This is verse 184 of Surah Al Baqara. The verse is quite clear. The instruction to fast is from Allah. If we say we are Muslims, it is incumbent upon each adult among us to fast unless we have the allowable excuses which are explained in the verses that follow this verse.

Moreover, we learn that previous people, namely the Jews and the Christians, and many others were prescribed fasting. So, it was nothing new for the Muslims. Since the greatest of prophets came to them with a book of instructions from Allah, Fasting was prescribed for all the followers of this book. This is how since the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) up till now and Allah knows for how long more, Muslims throughout the world do keep fast during the month of Ramadan.

In the beginning, there were a few Muslims in Mecca where they were persecuted. Eventually the Holy Prophet (saw) emigrated to Medina and since then, the number of Muslims has been increasing around the world and will go on increasing by Allah's Grace. According to some reports, there were around 100,000 Muslims in the last Hajj in 632AD in which the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) participated. But by Allah's Grace, we have around 1.9 billion Muslims around the world today and most of the adults take great pleasure in Fasting. These days, due to the internet, we can have an idea of how these Muslims spend this month of Ramadan around the world. We can listen to different *qaris* reading the Holy Quran and we can even witness live how the five daily prayers are being offered in the Mecca and Medina. It is indeed a very emotional moment to see the places where the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his companions lived. What I want to say is that this prescription to fast has gone on capturing people's hearts around the world and today, the Muslim world is a force to reckon with. May Allah strengthen Muslims around the world and May Allah help them and solve all their problems. Ameen.

Furthermore, Allah tells us that Fasting has been prescribed for us so that we might become righteous (*la'allakoum tattaqoune*). We are all well aware that while we are fasting, we are not allowed to eat or drink or engage in any type of sexual activity. If we do any of these, the fast is broken and we need to repeat it. However, we also know that the majority of fasters do take great care not to take food or drink or engage in sexual activity while fasting. In our heart of heart, we feel that if we engage in these activities, we would be committing a great sin and we refrain from doing it. So, fasting develops in us the consciousness that we cannot cheat with any of its prohibitions and we refrain from even approaching them. We know that we would pay a heavy price if we break the limits set by Allah. In other words, it helps us develop the consciousness that Allah is watching over us wherever we are and so we do our best not to overstep the limits that he has set for us. Since fasting helps us in being conscious of Allah most of the time, it is expected that we should be doing the same thing in the other months of the year if we really want to be good and approved servants of Allah with whom He is pleased. Hence, we would live in God consciousness most of the time and our piety would increase and insha Allah, we would win Allah's Pleasure as He expects us to do.

I will now share with you some hadiths about *taqwa* (righteousness).

Anas reported: A man came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and he said, "O Messenger of Allah, I intend to travel, so supplicate for my provision." The Prophet said, "**May Allah provide you with fear of Him.**" The man said, "Give me more." The Prophet said, "**May He forgive your sins.**" The man said, "Give me more, may my father and my mother be ransomed for you!" The Prophet said, "**May He make goodness easy for you wherever you are.**" (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi* 3444)

Abu Dharr reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "**I instruct you to fear Allah in your private and public affairs. If you do a bad deed, then**

do a good deed. Do not ask anyone for anything, even if you drop your whip. Do not violate what is entrusted, and do not take a position as judge between two people.”
(*Musnad Ahmad* 21573)

The Holy Prophet (saw) said in his address on the occasion of the victory at Makkah: "Thanks to our Lord Who has removed from you the evil of ignorance and its pride. O People; all mankind is divided only into two parts. The one righteous and *muttaqi*, who is honoured in the eyes of God, and the other wicked, shameless and damned, who is despised and contemptible in the eyes of God. Otherwise all men are offspring of Adam and God Created Adam from dust."

Hence people are distinguished by their level of *taqwa*. On the occasion of his Last Pilgrimage, the Prophet (saw) said. "O People; Beware, you all have One God. No Arab has preference over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, nor a white over a black, nor a black over a white except from *taqwa* (piety). The most honoured among you in the eyes of God is the one who is most pious."

The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "you are all descendants of Adam and he was created from dust. O People, leave boasting of ancestry, otherwise you will be more despised more than an ordinary insect in the eyes of God."

On another occasion, the Prophet (saw) said, "On the Day of Judgement, God will not ask you of your ancestry. The most honoured among you in the eyes of God is the one who is most pious." And he also said, "God does not see your faces and your wealth, what He sees is your hearts and your deeds."

These are just a few hadiths that I have shared with our friends with the hope that it reminds us of what is important and unimportant in life and what we should cultivate in this blessed month of Ramadan incha Allah.

Now let us remind ourselves of some extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah (as) about *taqwa*. He said:

“It is necessary for our Jamaat to adopt righteousness in this time of disorder, wherein a gust of misguidance, ignorance and depravity is blowing from every direction. The state of the world is such that the grandeur of the commandments of God Almighty is no longer visible. Rights and guidance are being neglected.

They are neither aware of their rights and how to discharge them, nor are they aware of the teaching given to them or which they themselves preach to others or which was preached to them. They are engrossed in worldly affairs beyond measure. Observing the slightest loss in worldly terms, they abandon religious practice and the rights of God Almighty. Just as one observes at a time of litigation and the distribution of inheritance. They conduct themselves

towards one another with greed. They are extremely weak when confronted by their personal desires.

They do not dare to commit sin as long as God has caused them to remain weak. However, as soon as they gain some strength and see an opportunity to commit sin, they swiftly do so.

Today, in this age, you may look everywhere you will find that neither true righteousness exists nor does true faith. However, God Almighty does not desire to waste the seed of their true righteousness and faith. When He observes that a harvest is at the brink of complete ruin, He causes a new crop to grow.

That everlasting Holy Quran is among us in relation to which God the Exalted has said:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَفِظُونَ

‘Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian.’ (Ch.15: V.10)

There is a large collection of the Ahadith [traditions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}] among us as well as the attached blessings with them. However, the hearts are void of faith, and no practical demonstration of religion is displayed. This is the very reason God Almighty has raised me so that I may once again inculcate these teachings. When God observed that the [religious] field was empty, His Divinity demanded that it no longer remain in this condition. God did not at all desire for this field to remain barren and for people to remain distant [from Him]. Therefore, God Almighty in contrast to those people, now wishes to create another nation of people that are alive, and for this very reason I admonish you to acquire a life of righteousness.” (*Malfuzat*, Vol. IV, pp. 395-396, 1985 UK)

So, by Allah’s Grace He has granted us this great opportunity in our lifetime to do what should be done so that we might have *taqwa* in our heart. So, let us all embrace this opportunity to do what is expected of us to become true Muslims as Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has taught us. May Allah grant us plenty of opportunities to do good in the blessed days that are coming. May we be able to fast, may we make plenty of supplications that Allah may accept from us. May we give in charity for those less fortunate than us and may Allah expand our consciousness of Him even more than before and may we all be forgiven by His Grace.

Ramadan Mubarak to us all. Ameen.