

FRIDAY SERMON

29th March 2024

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Alhamdolillah most days of Ramadan have already gone by. As you might all know, as from this coming Sunday, we will be starting the last ten days of this blessed month. As per a saying of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw), we learn that when the last ten days of Ramadan came, the eagerness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) to do good deeds increased. Hazrat Ayesha (ra) reports as follows:

“A’ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: “When the last ten nights (of Ramadan) would begin, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would keep awake at night (for prayer and devotion), awaken his family and prepare himself to be more diligent in worship”. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Although, despite our eagerness to try to do like him, most among us will not be able to follow this standard of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw), it does not mean that we should rest and not try to come as near as possible to this noble example of our beloved prophet. The coming nights are a great opportunity for each one among us to get protection from the fire of Hell. So, we should use the opportunity given to us to do our best to stay awake in some part of the night and engage ourselves in prayers and in the remembrance of Allah. We should beseech Him to erase all our sins from our record book that are being kept by angels. From the Holy Quran, we read:

وَكُلَّ إِنسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا

And every man's works have We fastened to his neck, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open. (17:14)

اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ ۖ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا

‘Read thy book. Sufficient is thy own soul this day as reckoner against thee.’ (17:15)

And the next verse is

“He who follows the right way follows it only for *the good* of his own soul: and he who goes astray, goes astray only to his own loss. And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another. We never punish until We have sent a Messenger.” (17:16)

So, what we should remember and take to heart is that under no circumstance should we fritter away our life in frivolous pursuits which leave a bad taste after they have been done because a day will come when we will be questioned about how we lived when we were on earth. Allah grants us an opportunity every year in the month of Ramadan to wash away all our sins and He offers us an opportunity to be as innocent as the day when we were born. So, a true believer, a practicing believer, an active believer, a fulltime believer will do his best to use the opportunity that Allah gives him to wash away all his sins. He would see to it that such an opportunity is not wasted but used in such a way to extract a maximum benefit from it.

So, we should wake up and pray and ask forgiveness for all our sins and be determined not to commit them again because of the fear of Allah, the consciousness of Allah under all circumstances is starting to overwhelm us. We bid farewell to Ramadan while at the same time we take the resolution to stay away from all sorts of sins. It is reported by Abu Huraira that:

“The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, ascended the pulpit and he said, **“Amin, amin, amin.”** It was said, “O Messenger of Allah, you ascended the pulpit and said amin, amin, amin.” The Prophet said, **“Verily, Gabriel came to me and he said: Whoever reaches the month of Ramadan and he is not forgiven, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say amin. I said amin. Whoever sees his parents in their old age, one or both of them, and he does not**

honor them and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say amin. I said amin. Whoever has your name mentioned in his presence and he does not send blessings upon you and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say amin. I said amin.” Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān 907

So, in trying to imitate the example of the Prophet (saw), let us make the coming nights those of prayer and asking for forgiveness and seeking of the means to come nearer to Allah. Hazrat Ayesha (ra) reports in a hadith as follows:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used to strive more in worship during Ramadan than he strove in any other time of the year; and he would devote himself more (in the worship of Allah) in the last ten nights of Ramadan than he strove in earlier part of the month. (Muslim).

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that one year, when the month of Ramadan started, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

This month (of Ramadan) has begun and there is a night in it better than one thousand months. (So,) any one deprived of its (blessings) is actually deprived of all goodness. Indeed, He is truly deprived who is kept away from its good. (Ibn Majah)

Hazrat A’ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Seek *Lailat Al-Qadr* (Night of Decree) in the odd nights out of the last ten nights of Ramadan.”** (Al-Bukhari).

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

“The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Whosoever performs *Qiyam* (night vigil prayer) during *Lailat Al-Qadr* (Night of Decree), with faith and being hopeful of Allah’s reward, will have his former sins forgiven.”** (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Hazrat `A`ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported:

“I asked: “O Messenger of Allah! If I realize *Lailat Al-Qadr* (The Night of Decree), what should I supplicate in it?” He (peace and blessings be upon him) replied, “**You should supplicate: *Allahumma innaka `afuwun, tuhibbul-`afwa, fa`fu `anni* (O Allah, You are The Effacer of sins, and You love effacing sins; so efface my sins).**” (At-Tirmidhi)

Let us all keep these words and deeds of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) in mind and may Allah help us in this endeavour and may we all inherit Jannatul Firdaus by His Grace. Ameen.

I will now read some more extracts about what Hazrat Masih Maood (as) said about righteousness(*taqwa*) which is the objective of fasting as per the verse "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ"

“O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous.” (2:184).

The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“To become truly righteous, it is necessary that a person abandoning utterly such outstanding vices as adultery, theft, trespass, hypocrisy, self-esteem, scorn of fellow beings, miserliness, should eschew all low morals and should make progress in high moral values. He should behave towards his fellow beings with politeness, courtesy and sympathy and should cultivate true fidelity and sincerity towards God Almighty. He should constantly seek occasions of beneficent service. He who combines all these qualities in himself is alone righteous.

The possession of any one of these qualities would not entitle a person to be accounted righteous unless he possesses collectively all of them. It is only these concerning whom it is said:

فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ:

On them shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve (7:36)

What more would they need? God Almighty becomes their guardian as it is said:

وَبُو يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ

And He protects the righteous. (7:197)

In another *Hadith* it is stated that God Almighty becomes their hands with which they grasp, and becomes their eyes with which they see, and becomes their ears with which they hear and becomes their feet with which they walk.

In another *Hadith* it is stated that God has proclaimed that he who bears enmity towards a friend of Mine should become ready to contend with Me. Still another *Hadith* declares that when anyone attacks a friend of God, He pounces upon him with the fierceness with which a tigress pounces upon one who seeks to deprive it of its young. [Malfuzaat, vol. IV, pp. 400-401]

In a translated Urdu poem, Masih Maood (as) said:

“He granted me this reward because of righteousness

Glory be to Him, Who put my enemies to shame.

What a wonderful gem is *Taqwa*!

Blessed is he who practices *Taqwa*.

Listen! The essence of Islam is *Taqwa*!

We have been granted righteousness by that Friend;

It is not from us; for it is a gift of God.

Strive hard if you are truthful and sincere;

So that you attain righteousness, which is the prerequisite to communion with the Beloved (*Liqā*).

This is the mirror which reflects the Creator;

This alone sharpens the sword of prayer.

The root of every virtue is the fear of God (*Ittiqa*);

If this root is intact, everything will remain intact.

This alone is the hallmark of the lofty status of saints;

What more do they have, except righteousness?

Fear Him O friends! He is the All-Seeing God;

If you ponder over it, even this world is the place of reward and punishment.

Love of God is the wine and *Taqwa* is the goblet.

Muslims! Live *Taqwa* in full;

Where is faith, if one is deficient in *Taqwa*?

This wealth, O God, you have granted me;

Glory be to Him, who put my enemies to shame”. **[Durr-e-Thamin Urdu]**

In another poem, he said:

“They alone are alive who are close to God;

Being accepted, they are the darling and beloved of God.

Those who are far from *Taqwa* are far from God;

They are perpetual prisoners of their pride, haughtiness and arrogance.

Friends! *Taqwa* means that you give up self-conceit;

Give up the habit of pride, arrogance and miserliness.

Renounce the love of this transient abode;

For that Beloved, give up the ways of luxury.

This way is the cursed way, give it up;

Or forget about (attaining closeness to) the Exalted God.

Accept the life of hardship with utmost sincerity;

So that angels of heaven may descend upon you.”

[Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Part. V, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 21, pp. 17-18]

We will end here for today. May I remind brothers and sisters that they have to pay *Sadaqatul Fitr* before Eid prayer. Hazrat Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) ordained Zakat ul Fitr to purify the fasting person from indecent words or actions, and to provide food for the needy. It is accepted as Zakat for the person who gives it before the Eid prayer; but it is a mere Sadaqah for the one who gives it after the prayer.” [Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah]

It is incumbent upon each living Muslim. The rate of payment is the equivalent of four and a half pounds of flour or wheat that you regularly consume. If you eat flour which costs 10 rupees per pound, your *Zakaatul Fitr* should be 45 rupees. If you eat basmati rice costing Rs 30 per pound, your *Zakaatul Fitr* should be Rs 135 per person. Usually, most members of our Jamaat pay more than these rates. May Allah accept it from all of us.

May Allah help each one among us to rise up to the occasion and to do our best to accomplish good deeds in these last days of Ramadan. Incha Allah. Ameen.