

FRIDAY SERMON

28th February 2025

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Once again, *All Praise belong to Allah* who has kept us alive on the eve of a new month of Ramadhan. The new moon for Ramadhan 1446 AH in 2025 was born today Friday, February 28 at 00:44 Universal Time and this is 04:44am Mauritian time. In all likelihood, the moon will not be visible today in Mauritius this evening after sunset. Hence, we can expect to see the moon tomorrow evening. If it is visible, we will start fasting insha Allah on Sunday 2nd March 2025.

Tomorrow evening, we will start reading namaz Tarawih here in Bait ur Rahma mosque after namaz Esha at 19:45. I take this opportunity to wish all our brothers and sisters and all close ones Ramadhan Mubarak. May Allah grant each one among us the opportunity to fast except if we have valid excuses. May Allah grant us the necessary strength and determination to complete the whole month of fasting. May we all do as is expected of us so that we do not spend our time in frivolous pursuits. May we all engage our time in praying *nawafil* seeking self-purification, reading the Holy Quran, reciting *istaghfaar*, helping the poor and earnestly seeking the pleasure of Allah in everything that we do insha Allah.

The verse of the Holy Quran where we have been commanded to observe fasting in the month of Ramadhan are as follows:

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)

In fact, fasting was prescribed about one or one and a half year after the Holy Prophet(saw) arrived in Medina. The object of fasting is to develop *taqwa* within us.

This word is translated into English as “righteousness”, “God consciousness” or even “piety” or “fear of God”. However, Allah says in Al Baqara, verse 178:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

“It is not righteousness (virtue) that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but *truly* righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and spends his money for love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask *for charity*, and for *ransoming* the captives; and who observes Prayer and pays the Zakat; and those who fulfil their promise when they have made one, and the patient in poverty and afflictions and *the steadfast* in time of war; it is these who have proved truthful and it is these who are the God-fearing.” (2:178)

When we wish to understand who are the “*muttaqoune*” and we refer to this verse, we come to understand that the word *taqwa* embraces lots of meaning as has been described in the above verse. In other words, a *muttaqi* is someone who does his best to regularly practice what has been described in the abovementioned verse.

So, when we fast, we are determined to become such Muslims who have firm belief in Allah, in the last day, in His Angels and the prophets and who spend their money for the love of Allah on all those who are in need and who have been mentioned in this verse. In addition, the “*Muttaqoune*” observe prayer and pay the Zakaat as well. And that is not all, they fulfill all promises that they have made. If one makes a promise one has to do one’s best to fulfill it. But there is a promise concerning what is our mission as a human being. We need to understand that and do our best to fulfill it and that is something that Ramadan helps us to be conscious of but we need to work on it in the other days beyond Ramadan as well. Insha Allah we will remind about this in one khutbah Jummah later on.

So, what we understand is that Fasting helps us in developing *taqwa* within ourselves but we need to do more than just fasting in order to develop within us such practices as described above which will qualify us as true *Muttaqi* in the sight of Allah. We should try to bear this in mind.

In the next verse concerning fasting, we can read:

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۖ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكٍ ۚ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ ۚ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

“The fasting days are for a limited period of 29 or 30 days. Allah knows how much a human being can go without food and water. He knows its benefits both physical and spiritual. However, if someone is such or is on a journey, he can replace the fast when he has recovered or when he is not travelling. Nothing will be diminished in his reward for fasting in other days than Ramadhan. However, if someone finds it really difficult to fast (an old person or a pregnant woman or a mother feeding her baby or some other cause) he/she can expiate for not fasting by feeding a poor person during the whole month”. At the end of this verse, Allah says fasting is good for you if you could know its benefits. Those who devote themselves to Allah have spoken of its spiritual benefits and even in the Ahadith we read about its spiritual benefits. These days some people in the medical field are prescribing some types of fasting to cure some diseases or to reduce their ill effects. This means it has some other benefits other than the spiritual ones. Allah is always right.

Now, we will remind ourselves of some hadith so that we might bear in mind what the Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw) taught his followers about fasting.

Narrated Talha bin 'Ubaid-Ullah:

“A Bedouin with unkempt hair came to Allah's Apostle and said, "O Allah's Apostle! Inform me what Allah has made compulsory for me as regards the prayers." He replied: "You have to offer perfectly the five compulsory prayers in a day and night (24 hours), unless you want to pray Nawafil." The Bedouin further asked, "Inform me what Allah has made compulsory for me as regards fasting." He replied, "You have to fast during the whole month of Ramadan, unless you want to fast more as Nawafil." The Bedouin further asked, "Tell me how much Zakat Allah has enjoined on me." Thus, Allah's Apostle informed him about all the rules (i.e., fundamentals) of Islam. The Bedouin then said, "By Him Who has honored you, I will neither perform any Nawafil nor will I decrease what Allah has enjoined on me. Allah's Apostle said, "If he is saying the truth, he will succeed (or he will be granted Paradise)." (Bokhari)

Narrated Ibn 'Umar:

“The Prophet observed the fast on the 10th of Muharram ('Ashura), and ordered (Muslims) to fast on that day, but when the fasting of the month of Ramadan was prescribed, the fasting of the 'Ashura' was abandoned”. (Bokhari)

There are many Muslims who say that we should fast on the 10th of Muharram. But this hadith goes against this practice. We should always do our best to follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw).

The next hadith is as follows:

Narrated Abu Huraira:

“Allah's Apostle said, "Fasting is a shield (or a screen or a shelter). So, the person observing fasting should avoid sexual relation with his wife and should not behave foolishly and impudently, and if somebody fights with him or abuses him, he should tell him twice, 'I am fasting.'" The Prophet added, "By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, the smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the sight of Allah than the smell of musk. (Allah says about the fasting person), 'He has left his food, drink and desires for My sake. The fast is for Me. So, I will reward (the fasting person) for it and the reward of good deeds is multiplied ten times.'" (Bokhari)

Narrated Sahl:

“The Prophet said, "There is a gate in Paradise called Ar-Raiyan, and those who observe fasts will enter through it on the Day of Resurrection and none except them will enter through it. It will be said, 'Where are those who used to observe fasts?' They will get up, and none except them will enter through it. After their entry, the gate will be closed and nobody will enter through it." (Bokhari)

Narrated Abu Huraira:

“Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever gives two kinds (of things or property) in charity for Allah's Cause, will be called from the gates of Paradise and will be addressed, 'O slaves of Allah! Here is prosperity.' So, whoever was amongst the people who used to offer their prayers, will be called from the gate of the prayer; and whoever was amongst the people who used to participate in Jihad, will be called from the gate of Jihad; and whoever was amongst those who used to observe fasts, will be called from the gate of Ar-Raiyan; whoever was amongst those who used to give in charity, will be called from the gate of charity." Abu Bakr said, "Let my parents be sacrificed for you, O Allah's Apostle! No distress or need will befall him who will be called from those gates. Will there be any one who will be called from all these gates?" The Prophet replied, "Yes, and I hope you will be one of them." (Bokhari)

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained." (Bokhari)

Allah is very generous and He generates in His servants an enthusiasm to do good and to refrain from evil especially during the Holy month of Ramadan. Incha Allah in the coming Fridays of Ramadan we will speak of more hadiths.

Now, I would like to tell you how Hazrat Masih Maood(as) used to pray Tahajjud during the month of Ramadhan. It is related by Hazrat Dr Mir Muhammed Ismail^(ra) who was the brother-in-law of Hazrat Masih Maood(as) as follows:

“In 1895, I happened to pass the entire month of Ramadan in Qadian and offered the Tahajjud – i.e., the Tarawih – prayers behind the Promised Messiah^(as) throughout the month. It was Huzoor’ s^(as) custom to offer the *Witr* prayer in the first part of the night and eight *rak‘aat* [units of prayer] of the Tahajjud prayer in divisions of two in the latter part.

“In it, he would recite *Ayat-ul-Kursi* in the first *rak‘ah*, i.e. *وَهُوَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ* up until *وَالْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ* and in the second *rak‘ah*, he would recite Surah al-Ikhlās. Mostly, whilst in *ruku* or *sajda*, he would recite:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيْثُ

“‘O Living and Self-Sustaining God, with Your mercy do I seek help.’ His manner of reciting this was such that I would be able to hear his voice.”

Our brothers and sisters also may do the same if they wish. Hazrat Masih Maood(as) was an *Arif billah* (one who knows Allah) and he knew what he was doing. Besides this Hazrat Masih Maood(as) has advised us to supplicate for our own needs in our own language because we can express ourselves in the best possible way.

May Allah help each one among us to reap the maximum benefits of the month of Ramadhan. May Allah admit us among the *Muttaqeen* even if our deeds are up till now worthy of admission into this noble group. We are doing our best but our hope is in Him. *Ameen*.