



RAMADAN 2020 - PREPARING FOR A DIFFERENT RAMADAN

1. INTRODUCTION

Finally, the month which all of us have been waiting and longing for will arrive within a month. However, this year, 2020 or 1441 AH, Ramadan will be different from previous years. It is very likely that many people in the UK will be on lockdown due to the government's guidelines on social distancing. The coronavirus pandemic has not reached its peak in the UK. This means all mosques may still be closed when Ramadan comes. Many therefore will not be able to pray the tarawih prayer in the mosque. However, instead of feeling sad and pessimistic, we have to take a positive view of this new development in Ramadan which we have not experienced before in our lifetime. There are several issues which we, as believers, must take into account:

1. **Everything has been decreed by Allah**

As believers, we must understand that everything has been written down and decreed by Allah:

"Say: "Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our Maula (Lord, Helper and Protector)." And in Allah let the believers put their trust." 9: 51

Therefore, we must believe in the general principles:

- a. Allah is the Best of Planner
- b. Trust in Allah
- c. Be patient
- d. Allah will always Test the believers.

2. **Whatever afflictions that befall upon us, we have to blame ourselves**

"And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much." 42: 30

As a Muslim Ummah, we have failed in many aspects. We have currently over 1.7 billion Muslims in the world. However, many of us have failed to uphold the true Deen of Islam:

- a. A lot of injustice in Muslim countries
- b. Many are taking Islam as a ritual
- c. Many are taking the western world as the model lifestyle
- d. Attractions of the dunya
- e. No Muslim countries are implementing the shariah law
- f. Many of us are ungrateful on Allah's Blessings
- g. We only worship Allah serious when we need Him or when we are in trouble, but when Allah Grant us what we wish for, many of us would forget Him.

"And among mankind is he who worships Allah as it were, upon the very edge (i.e. in doubt); if good befalls him, he is content therewith; but if a trial befalls him, he turns back on his face (i.e. reverts back to disbelief after embracing Islam). He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the evident loss." 22: 11

"Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!" And if some good reaches them, they say, "This is from Allah," but if some evil befalls them, they say, "This is from you (O Muhammad SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam)." Say: "All things are from Allah," so what is wrong with these people that they fail to understand any word?

Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself. And We have sent you (O Muhammad SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) as a Messenger to mankind, and Allah is Sufficient as a Witness.

4: 78-79

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked:

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "And if some good reaches them, they say, 'This is from Allaah,' but if some evil befalls them, they say, 'This is from you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم)." Say: 'All things are from Allaah'" [al-Nisa' 4:78], then in the next verse He says (interpretation of the meaning): "Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allaah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself". How can we reconcile between them?

He replied:

They may be reconciled by noting that the first verse refers to the decree of Allaah, i.e., it is from Allah; He is the one who decrees it. The second verse refers to the cause i.e., whatever of evil befalls you, you are the cause, and the One Who decrees evil and decrees the punishment for it is Allaah.

Allah also Warned us:

"O mankind! it is you who stand in need of Allah, but Allah is Rich (Free of all wants and needs), Worthy of all praise.

If He will, He could destroy you and bring about a new creation.

And that is not hard for Allah."

35: 15-17

3. Seek Allah's Forgiveness more rigorously

On the basis of our numerous disobedience all of us MUST immediately seek Allah's Forgiveness with more sincerity. We know how Allah Destroyed many nations in the past:

- Nations of Nuh
- People of 'Ad
- People of Thamud
- People of prophet prophet Lut (AS)
- The pharaoh and his people

Allah has Punished these people in the past and Allah would not hesitate to punish us. Perhaps we should follow the example of ONLY ONE NATION in the past which Allah has Saved: The nation of prophet Yunus (AS). Why did Allah Save this nation?

"Was there any town (community) that believed (after seeing the punishment), and its Faith (at that moment) saved it (from the punishment)? (The answer is none,) - except the people of Yunus (Jonah); when they believed, We removed from them the torment of disgrace in the life of the (present) world, and permitted them to enjoy for a while." 10: 98

In interpreting this Ayah, Qatadah said: "No town has denied the truth and then believed when they saw the scourge, and then their belief benefited them, with the exception of the people of Yunus. When they lost their Prophet and they thought that

the scourge was close upon them, Allah sent through their hearts the desire to repent. So they wore woolen fabrics and they separated each animal from its offspring. They then cried out to Allah for forty nights. When Allah saw the truth in their hearts and that they were sincere in their repentance and regrets, He removed the scourge from them." Qatadah said: "It was mentioned that the people of Yunus were in Naynawa, the land of Mosul." This was also reported from Ibn Mas`ud, Mujahid, Sa`id bin Jubayr and others from the Salaf.

Therefore perhaps now, in order to ask Allah to remove this huge trial of the corona virus, we should sincerely seek Allah's Forgiveness and follow what has been done by the nation of prophet Yunus (AS).

4. Terawih prayers are only sunnah

Many people are obsessed by the tarawih prayer and even ignored the more important obligatory prayers. They spent the night praying tarawih prayers in the mosque and some woke up late many times for Fajr prayers. Some used this as an opportunity to socialise in the mosque and outside the mosque. The real meaning of the tarawih prayer may have been lost.

5. Moderation during iftar

People are actually competing on who has the best iftar. Some invited the whole tribes for iftar and spent too much time eating and some even missed Maghrib prayers. Some ate too much and ended up being sleepy for tarawih prayer. Perhaps this year, when we should not invite others for iftar due to the social distancing instructions of the government, we would make simple iftar and focus more on the worship of Allah inshaAllah.

Therefore, the rest of the Ramadan should inshaAllah remain the same as it had been in previous years. Understanding all of the above, let us all now start preparing for a Ramadan as if this may be the ONLY Ramadan which we will experience |

2. OBSERVING THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN FROM THE QURAN AND HADITH

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى
وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ

"The month of Ramadân in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadân i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month..." [2: 185]

The word 'so' (fa) in this ayah leads to the following paraphrase of one aspect of its meaning: "Fast this month because it is the one in which the Qur'an was sent down" -- see Fasting in Ramadaan by Ali al-Halabi & Saleem al-Hilali, Al-Hidaayah, 1414/1994, pp. 11-12.

HADITH ONE

Abu Hurayrah (RA) relates the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said when one Ramadan came: "A blessed month has arrived. Observing it in fasting is mandated on you (the believers). During this month, the gates of Paradise will be opened and the gates of Hellfire will be closed. The evil ones (*Shayaatin*) will be handcuffed. In it there is one night, during which worship is better than worship in a thousand months. Whoever is denied its blessings has been denied the biggest blessing." [Related by Ahmad, Nasaee, and Baihaqi]

This hadith emphasizes the importance of being mindful and aware of the rules that govern the 'Ibadah of fasting.

HADITH TWO

There is also a hadith whereby our prophet Muhammad SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam said "Ameen" three times:

Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet, SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam, 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 SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam 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 915

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Albani

HADITH THREE

The great companion Talha bin 'Ubaidullah (radyAllahu 'anhu) narrated that two men came to the Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) and became Muslim together. After accepting Islam one of them would strive harder than the other. The one who used to strive harder went out to fight in the way of Allah and was martyred. The other man who accepted Islam at the same time as the martyr lived a year longer, then he also passed away.

Later Talha reported that he saw in a dream that he was at the gate of Paradise and he saw those two men that had died. Then through the gates of Paradise someone came out and admitted the one who had died last into Jannah, then he came out again and admitted the one who died first as a martyr. Then he came back to Talha and said: 'Go back, for your time has not yet come.'

The next morning, Talha told the people of the dream and they were amazed. News of that reached the Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) and they told him the story.

The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Why are you so amazed at that?"

They said: "O Messenger of Allah, the first one was the one who strove harder, and he died a martyr in the cause of Allah, but the other man (who didn't strive as hard and was not a martyr) was admitted to Paradise before him?"

The Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Did he (the second man) not live for another year?" They said: "Yes."

The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) asked: "And did not Ramadan come and he fasted, and he offered such and such prayers during that year?" They said: "Yes."

The Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "The difference between them is greater than the difference between the heaven and the earth." ~ [Collected by Ibn Majah]

3. VIRTUES OF THE MONTH OF RAMADAN

- i. It is the month of the **obligatory fast**, which is one of the pillars of Islam, as ordered by Allah SWT:

"So, whoever among you witnesses the month should fast [2:185]

However, it is wrong to assume that fasting is the only form of worship in Ramadan because the virtues of Ramadan is much more than fasting, as we will clarify below. Other forms of worship are equally important!

- ii. It is the month of the **Qur'an**, with regards to revelation and study:

"The month of Ramadan is that in which was revealed the Qur'an."
[2:185].

On the authority of Ibn `Abbas: Jibril (AS) used to meet the Prophet (sallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) every night in Ramadan and used to study Qur'an with him (sallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam).

- iii. It is the month of **standing (in voluntary night prayer)**. On the authority of Abu Hurayrah: The Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Whoever stands (in voluntary night prayer) during Ramadan, with faith and in expectancy of reward, his previous sins are forgiven him."
[Related by Al Bukhari & Muslim]

- iv. It is the month of **seclusion (I'tikaf)**. Ibn `Umar said,

"The Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to seclude himself for the last ten days of the month of Ramadan." [Related by Al Bukhari & Muslim]

- v. It is the month of **generosity**. Ibn `Abbas said, "The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to be at his most generous in Ramadan."

4. RAMADAN AND FASTING

i. FASTING FROM THE QURAN AND SUNNAH

The fast of Ramadan, according to the Qur'an, sunnah and consensus, is obligatory.

The evidence from the Qur'an consists of the following two verses, one which was stated above (2:185), and the other:

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

"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for the people before you in order for you to gain God consciousness" [2: 183]

From the sunnah we have the following statements of the Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam):

"Islam is built upon [the following] five pillars: testifying that there is no God except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, the establishment of the prayer, the giving of zakah, the fast of Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Makkah." [Related by Al Bukhari]

Talhah ibn 'Ubaidullah reported that a man came to the Prophet SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam and said: "O Messenger of Allah, tell me what Allah requires of me as regards fasting." He answered, "The month of Ramadan." The man asked: "Is there any other [fast]?" The Prophet SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam answered: "No, unless you do so voluntarily." [Related by Al Bukhari]

ii. THE VIRTUES OF FASTING

- (a) Abu Hurairah reported the Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), saying: "Allah said: 'Every action of the son of Adam is for him except fasting, for that is **solely for Me. I give the reward for it.**' The fast is a shield. If one is fasting, he should not use foul language, raise his voice, or behave foolishly. If someone reviles him or fights with him he should say, 'I am fasting,' twice. By the One in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the [bad] breath of the one who is fasting is better in the sight of Allah on the Day of Resurrection than the smell of musk. The one who is fasting is happy at two times:

when he breaks his fast he is happy with it, and when he meets his Lord he will be happy that he has fasted." [Ahmad, Muslim, and An-Nasa'i]

A similar version was recorded by al-Bukhari and Abu Dawud, but with the following addition: "*He leaves his food, drink, and desires for My sake. His fasting is for Me... I will give the reward for it, and for every good deed, he will receive ten similar to it.*"

- (b) The fact that he is abstaining from food and drink both in public and in secret shows his honest faith and strong love of Allah, and his knowledge and feeling that Allah is all-knowing of everything. For this reason Allah has made the reward for fasting greater than for any other type of worship. Allah said in the **hadith Qudsi**: "*Every deed of the son of Adam will be multiplied [in rewards], the good deed by ten of its like, up to seven hundreds, up to whatever Allah wills, except fasting, it is for Me and I will reward it. He abandons his desire and his food for My sake..*" (Related by Muslim)

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "*...And people may see that a person is not eating in front of them, but the fact that he is really abandoning his food and his desire for the sake of God is a thing that nobody can find out about, and that is the essence of fasting.*" (Zaad al-Ma'ad 2/29)

- (c) 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr reported that the Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), said: "*The fast and the Qur'an are two **intercessors** for the servant of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The fast will say: 'O Lord, I prevented him from his food and desires during the day. Let me intercede for him.'* The Qur'an will say: '*I prevented him from sleeping at night. Let me intercede for him.'* And their intercession will be accepted." [Ahmad related this hadith with a sahih chain]
- (d) Abu Umamah reported: "I came to the Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and said: '*Order me to do a deed that will allow me to enter Paradise.*' He said: '*Stick to fasting, as there is no equivalent to it.*' Then I came to him again and he said: '*Stick to fasting.*'" [Related by Ahmad, an-Nasa'i, and al-Hakim who classified it as sahih].
- (e) Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported that the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "*No servant fasts on a day in the path of Allah except that Allah removes the hellfire seventy years further away from his face.*" [Related by "the group," except for Abu Dawud]
- (f) Sahl ibn Sa'd reported that the Prophet SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "*There is a gate to Paradise that is called ar-Rayyan. On the Day of Resurrection it will say: 'Where are those who fasted?' When the last [one] has passed through the gate, it will be locked.*" [Related by al Bukhari and Muslim]

5. RAMADAN AND AL-QURAN

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ

The month of Ramadân in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong) [2: 185]

This verse clearly indicates the link between the Holy month of Ramadan and the Holy Quran, as stated in the earlier statement.

Ibn 'Abbas narrates "that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was the most generous person, and he would be at his most generous in Ramadan because Jibril would come to him every night and he would rehearse the Qur'an with him." [Reported by al-Bukhari]

This hadith contains recommendation of the following:

- Studying the Qur'an in Ramadan;
- coming together for this purpose;
- checking (one's memory/knowledge of) the Qur'an with someone who has preserved it better;
- increasing recitation of the Qur'an in Ramadan;
- that the night time is the best time to recite, when other preoccupations decrease and it is easier to concentrate, as in Surah al-Muzzammil 73:6.

Further, Fatimah (RA) narrated from her father (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), who told her that Jibril (AS) would rehearse the Quran with him (in Ramadan) once every year, and he did so twice in the year of his death. [Related by al Bukhari]

Studying the Quran should bring people together, but if it failed, the our beloved Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) advised us: "*Recite the Quran as long as your hearts agree on it; if you disagree about it, stop reciting it (for the time being)*" [Related by Al Bukhari]

6. RAMADAN AND LAITATUL QADR

Lailatul Qadr, or the Night of Power, is so important that one whole chapter of the Holy Quran is devoted specially for this very special occasion:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ
لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ
تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ
سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

"Verily, We have sent it (this Qur'an) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree).

And what will make you know what the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is?

The Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e., worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e., 83 years and 4 months).

Therein descend the angels and the Ruh [Jibril (Gabriel)] by Allah's Permission with all Decrees.

(All that night), there is peace (and goodness from Allah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn."

[Surah Al Qadr 97: 1-5]

On this night, the single most important event in human history unfolded as, after the Glorious Qurân was preserved in the Protected Tablet, Jibril (AS) descended with the blessed book to reveal it, upon Allâh's command, to His Messenger (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

Allah SWT also reminded us in another verse of the Holy Quran:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُّبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ

أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ

رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

"We sent it (this Qur'an) down on a blessed night [(i.e., the Night of Al-Qadr, Surah No:97) in the month of Ramadan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar]. Verily, We are ever warning [mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of Lordship and in Our Oneness of worship].

Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments (i.e., the matters of deaths, births, provisions, and calamities for the whole (coming) year as decreed by Allah).

As a Command (or this Qur'an or the Decree of every matter) from Us. Verily, We are ever sending (the Messengers).

(As) a Mercy from your Rubb, Verily! He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."

[Surah Ad Dukhaan 44: 3-6]

These verses of the Quran significantly elevate the status of this special part of Ramadan.

(a) When is Lailatul Qadr

Aishah (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to seclude himself (in the mosque) during the last ten nights of Ramadan. He would say, "Search for Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree) in the **last ten nights of Ramadan.**"

[Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

In another hadeeth:

^Aishah (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to observe I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan and say, "Seek Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree) in the **odd nights** out of the last ten nights of Ramadan."

[Related by Al-Bukhari]

We learn from this Hadith that Lailat-ul-Qadr occurs in any of the five odd nights - 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th - of the last ten nights of Ramadan. Its exact date has not been revealed for the reason that people keep themselves awake for prayer for a larger number of nights. Had its date been fixed, people would have kept awake for prayer only on that night. There is a general belief among the scholars that it is fixed, on the 27th night of Ramadan. But this is not correct. Ahadith do not confirm this view.

In another hadeeth:

`Aishah (RA) reported: When the last ten nights (of Ramadan) would begin, the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) would keep awake at night (for prayer and devotion), awaken his family and prepare himself to be more diligent in worship. [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Lastly,

`Aishah (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) 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. [Related by Muslim]

(b) The reward for those who worship during Lailatul Qadr

Abu Hurairah (RA) reported: The Prophet (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, "*Whosoever performs Qiyam during Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree), with Faith and being hopeful of Allah's reward, will have his former sins forgiven.*" [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

“Qiyam” here means what keeps one awake to one's capacity and for worship and makes one perform Nawafil, impels one to beg forgiveness from Allah SWT, urges one to praise Him (SWT). Specially, if a person performs `Isha prayer and Fajr prayer in congregation, he will hopefully attain all those distinctions which are mentioned in this Hadith.

(c) Dua during lailatul Qadr

`Aishah (RA) reported: I asked: "O Messenger of Allah! If I realise Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree), what should I supplicate in it?" He (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) replied, "You should supplicate:

فَاعْفُ عَنِّي اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ ، تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ

Allahumma innaka `afuwwun, tuhibbul-`afwa, fa`fu `anni

O Allah, You are Most Forgiving, and You love forgiveness; so forgive me."

[Related by Ahmad, Ibn Majah & At-Tirmidhi]

(d) Signs of Lailatul Qadar

The Prophet (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) described the night as serene, tranquil, and peaceful. The sun at sunrise would appear reddish and without its normal blazing and sharp rays. Ubayy (RA) said : "*On the morning of the night of Qadr the sun would rise without any beams; (it is like) a wash basin until it raises.*" [Related by Muslim]

Abu Hurairah (RA) said : "*We mentioned the night of Qadr to the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) and he said: "Which of you remembers when the moon rises and it is like half a bowl."* [Related by Muslim]

Ibn Abbaas (RA) said that the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) said : "*The night of Qadr is a night of generosity and happiness, it is not hot and neither is it cold. The sun comes up in its morning weak, reddish.*" [Related by Tabarane, Ibn Khuzaimah and Bazaar]

The Prophet (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) added that "*the angel of earth on that night of Qadr will be more numerous than all the pebbles of the earth.*"

7. RAMADAN AND QIYAM AL-LAYL

(a) Introduction

Qiyam means '*standing*' and '**Qiyam al-Layl**' means '*standing at night*'. In the Shari'ah term both terms refer to '*the voluntary night prayer, whose time extends after the Isha praye until dawn.*'

This voluntary prayer is described as Qiyam al-Layl because it involves long standings, in which long portions of the Qur'an are recited. Other common names for this prayer are '**Salat al-Layl**' (the night prayer), **Tahajjud** (from hajjada meaning awake at night), **witr** and **Tarawih** (resting). [Lisan ul-Arab under 'Hajada' and 'Rawaha']

It should be noted that Tahajjud is not different from Qiyam and Tarawih, these are different names of the same prayer. Commonly the word Taraweeh is used to describe this prayer in Ramadaan, the Muslims used this term from early times. Muhammad Shaqrah says: *"The reason for this name is that due to long recitation the people used to rest after every four rak'ah. Eventually this practice became a necessary element of Taraweeh even with short recitations. This led people to think that 'Tarawih' is the correct name revealed to Allah's Messenger (SAW)." [Irsad us- Sari p.75-77]*

This Nafil Salat has been interpreted in Ahadith as Qiyam Ramadan. Later on they were named Tarawih. Tarawih is the plural of Tarwihah. Since the Companions of the Prophet (SAW) and the successors to the Companions used to make a lengthy Qiyam in them and they would take rest after performing every four Rak`ah. This is how these came to be named Tarawih (Rest prayer). (Four Rak`ah are called Tarwihah).

(b) Excellence of Qiyam in Ramadan

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

- i. Abu Hurairah (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "He who observes optional prayer (Tarawih prayers) throughout Ramadan, out of sincerity of Faith and in the hope of earning reward will have his past sins pardoned." [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]
- ii. Abu Hurairah (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to urge (the people) to perform (optional Tarawih) prayer at night during the month of Ramadan. He did not order them or make it obligatory on them. He (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "Whosoever performs (optional Tarawih) prayers at night during the month of Ramadan, with Faith and in the hope of receiving Allah's reward, will have his past sins forgiven." [Muslim]

AMONG THE MOST RIGHTEOUS

Amr bin Murrah al-Juhani (RA) said: "A man from the tribe of Quraysh asked the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam): "O Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) What if I testified that there is no (true) god except Allah and that you are Allah's Messenger, prayed the five prayers, fasted the month, stood for Qiyam in Ramadan and paid Zakah?"

The Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) replied: "Anyone dying like this will be among the siddiqun (the highly virtuous) and the shuhadah (martyrs)." [(sahih) Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Hibban]

8. RAMADAN AND ZAKAAH AL FITR

Zakaah al-Fitr is often referred to as Sadaqah al-Fitr. The word Fitr means the same as Iftaar, breaking a fast and it comes from the same root word as Futoor which means breakfast. Thus, Islamically, Zakaah al-Fitr is the name given to charity which is distributed at the end of the fast of Ramadan,

Sadaqah al-Fitr is a duty which is **Wajib** on every Muslim, whether male or female, minor or adult as long as he/she has the means to do so.

The proof that this form of charity is compulsory can be found in the Sunnah whereby Ibn `Umar reported that the Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) made Zakaah al-Fitr compulsory on every slave, freeman, male, female, young and old among the Muslims; one Saa` of dried dates or one Saa` of barely. [Bukhaaree]

The head of the household may pay the required amount for the other members. Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree said, "On behalf of our young and old, free men and slaves, we used to take out during Allaah's Messenger's (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) lifetime one Saa` of grain, cheese or raisins". [Muslim]

SIGNIFICANCE

- I. The significant role played by Zakaah in the **circulation of wealth** within the Islamic society is also played by the Sadaqah al-Fitr. However, in the case of Sadaqah al-Fitr, each individual is required to calculate how much charity is due from himself and his dependents and go into the community in order to find those who deserve such charity. Thus, Sadaqah al-Fitr plays a very important role in the **development of the bonds of community**. The rich are obliged to come in direct contact with the poor, and the poor are put in contact with the extremely poor. This contact between the various levels of society helps to build real bonds of brotherhood and love within the Islamic community and trains those who have, to be generous to those who do not have.
- II. The main purpose of Zakaah al-Fitr is to provide those who fasted with the means of **making up for their errors during the month of fasting**. Zakaah al-Fitr also provides the poor with a means with which they can celebrate the festival of breaking the fast (Eed al-Fitr) along with the rest of the Muslims.

Ibn Abbaas reported, "The Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) made Zakaah al-Fitr compulsory so that those who fasted may be purified of their idle deeds and shameful talk (committed during Ramadaan) and so that the poor may be fed. Whoever gives it before Salaah will have it accepted as Zakaah, while he who gives it after the Salaah has given Sadaqah." [Abu Dawood - rated Saheeh by Shaikh Naser Al-Albanee]

Hence, the goal of Sadaqah al-Fitr is the spiritual development of the Believers. By making them give up some of their wealth, the believers are taught the higher moral characteristics of generosity, compassion (sympathy for the unfortunate), gratitude to God and the righteousness. But, since Islaam does not neglect man's material need, part of the goal of Zakaah al-Fitr is the economic well-being of the poorer members of society.

9. RAMADAN AND I'TIKAF

I'tikaf during the last ten nights and *i'tikaf* being done in all mosques going by the words of Allah SWT:

وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

"But do not have sexual intercourse with them while you are in retreat in the mosques. These are Allah's limits, so do not go near them. Thus does Allah make His Signs clear to people so that perhaps they will be godfearing." (2:187)

A. Ibn `Umar (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to observe I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan. [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

B. `Aishah (RA) reported: The Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to engage himself in I'tikaf (seclusion for prayers) in the mosque during the last ten nights of Ramadan till he passed away; thereafter, his wives followed this practice after him. [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

C. Abu Hurairah (RA) reported: The Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to observe I'tikaf every year (during Ramadan) for ten days; in the year in which he passed away, he observed I'tikaf for twenty days. [Related by Al-Bukhari].

It is preferred for the one who is making I'tikaf to perform many supererogatory acts of worship and to occupy himself with prayers, reciting the Qur'an, glorifying and praising Allah, extolling His oneness and His greatness, asking His forgiveness, sending salutations on the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and supplicating Allah - that is, all actions that bring one closer to Allah. Included among these actions is studying and reading books of tafsir and hadith, books on the lives of the Prophets, upon whom be peace, books of fiqh, and so on.

Women doing I'tikaf

'Aisha (the wife of the Prophet) reported that the Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), used to practice I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan till he died and then his wives used to practice I'tikaf after him. [Bukhari]

It is permitted for women to do i'tikaf (spiritual retreat) in a specific place in their house, whenever they have the time and are able to do so without neglecting their family duties and other responsibilities.

The same considerations would apply as in any other i'tikaf: one's primary concern during the time should be towards worship, and unnecessary worldly activity should be avoided.

Even when one is in their monthly period, it is recommended in the Hanafi school to sit in a designated place of prayer (musalla) at home, after having made wudu, and make dhikr for the time it takes to pray.

EVIDENCE OF THE WEAKNESS OF THIS COMMONLY USED HADITH

After a detailed analysis of all the corroboratory chains of the *ḥadīth* in question, it can be concluded that it is of a slightly weak nature. The weakness of the narration, however, is not of such severity as to render it baseless. Narrations of this type can be used for the purpose of encouragement and relation of virtue according to the opinion of the vast majority of *ḥadīth* scholars.

The *ḥadīth* has been narrated in a number of primary authoritative collections of *aḥādīth*, namely Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah (*ḥadīth*: 1887) with one chain, Bayhaqī's *Shu'ab al-Īmān* (*ḥadīth*: 3608) with numerous chains, and in brief in *al-Thawāb* of Abu al-Shaykh Ibn Ḥayyān. In secondary *ḥadīth* sources, this narration has been mentioned in full in *al-Mundhirī's al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb* (*ḥadīth*: 1462).

The full text of the *hadīth* is as follows:

“Salmān (r) reports: ‘On the last day of Sha‘bān, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ addressed us and said: "O People, there comes upon you now a great month, a most blessed month, in which lies a night greater in worth than one thousand months. It is a month in which Allah has made compulsory that the fasting should be observed by day; and He has made the *tarāwīḥ* by night a *sunnah*. Whosoever tries drawing nearer to Allāh by performing any virtuous deed in this month, for him shall be such reward as if he had performed a *farḍ* (obligatory observance) in any other time of the year. And whoever performs a *farḍ* for him shall be the reward of seventy *farḍ* in any other time of the year. This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for true patience is *Jannah* (Paradise); it is the month of sympathy with one's fellowmen; it is the month wherein a true believer's *rizq* (sustenance) is increased. Whosoever feeds a fasting person in order to break the fast (at sunset), for him there shall be forgiveness of his sins and emancipation from the fire of *Jahannam* (Hell), and for him shall be the same reward as for him (whom he fed), without that person's reward being diminished in the least."

Thereupon we said: 'O Messenger of Allāh, not all of us possess the means whereby we can provide enough for a fasting person to break his fast" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "Allah grants this same reward to him who gives a fasting person a single date or a drink of water or a sip of milk to break the fast. This is a month, the first part of which brings Allah's mercy, the middle of which brings His forgiveness and the last part of which brings emancipation from the fire of *Jahannam* (Hell). Whosoever lessens the burden of his servants (bondsmen) in this month, Allāh will forgive him and free him from the fire of *Jahannam*."

"And in this month, four things you should endeavor to perform in great number, two of which shall be to please your Lord, while the other two shall be those without which you cannot make do. Those which shall be to please your Lord, are that you should in great quantity recite the *kalimah tayyibah*: *Lā ilāha illa Allāh*, and make much *istighfār* (beg Allah's forgiveness with *Astaghfirullāh*). And as for those two without which you cannot make do, you should be Allāh for entry into paradise and seek refuge with Him from the fire of *Jahannam*."

"And whoever gave a person who fasted water to drink Allāh shall grant him a drink from my fountain, such a drink where after he shall never again feel thirsty until he enters *Jannah*."

Status of the Chains:

The narration in question has been mentioned with a few different chains in the canonical collections of prophetic tradition. Most of the chains are problematic,

containing narrators of highly unreliable status. The severity of the weakness of such narrators does not allow for the narration of such chains even in the case of *fadā'il* (virtuous acts).

One such chain includes Yūsuf ibn Ziyād who is considered “very weak”. If his chain alone was considered then the *ḥadīth* would not be valid for narration. Similar is the case of Iyās ibn ‘Abd al-Ghaffār, who is *majhūl* (unknown), and Abān ibn ‘Ayyāsh, who is *matruk* (abandoned), as well as any chains that contain them.

Iyās ibn ‘Abd al-Ghaffār’s narration on the authority of ‘Alī ibn Zayd is mentioned in Bayhaqī’s *Shu‘ab al-Īmān*. Regarding Iyās, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar states: “I do not know him.”

One chain of this *ḥadīth*, mentioned by Imam Muḥamilī in his *Amālī*, however, is free of major flaws and is afflicted only with the presence of ‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn Jud‘ān and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Jud‘ānī. [*Amālī* v.1 pg.299]

This is the strongest of all the chains of this particular *ḥadīth*. Let us now analyze the two apparently weak narrators of the chain in order to determine the strength of the chain and the validity of narrating the *ḥadīth*.

‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn Jud‘ān:

His full name is ‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abū Mulaykatakah (whose name is Zuhayr ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Jud‘ān ibn ‘Amr ibn Ka‘b ibn Sa‘d bin Taym ibn Murrah al-Qurashī al-Taymī). He relates *ḥadīth* from Anas bin Mālik al-Ansārī, Aws bin Khālīd, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Zurārah ibn Awfā, Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr, Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyib, and ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr amongst others.

His *aḥādīth* have been narrated by Imāms Muslim, Abū Dawūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Nisā’ī, and Bukhārī (al-Adab al-Mufrad) in their respective collections of *aḥādīth*.

Sāliḥ ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal relates on the authority of his father that he said: “He is not strong. Sometimes, people narrate on his authority.”

Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ṣāliḥ stated on the authority of Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn: “He is weak.” He is also reported to have said regarding him, on different occasions: “He is not of [reliable] status,” “He is weak in everything,” “He is nothing,” “He is not evidence,” but also “‘Alī ibn Zayd is more beloved to me than Ibn ‘Aqīl and ‘Āsim ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh.”

Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Ujalī stated: “His *ḥadīth* can be recorded, but he is not strong.” Ya‘qūb ibn Shaybah stated: “He is reliable (*thiqah*) and trustworthy in *ḥadīth*, but he is slightly towards laxness (*līn*).”

Tirmidhī said: “He is trustworthy (*sadūq*), except that sometimes he raises a *ḥadīth* that was raised by someone else.”

Nisā’ī stated: “He is weak.” Ibn Khuzaymah commented: “I do not rely upon him because of his weak memory.” Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar states: “[The status of this *ḥadīth*] revolves around ‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn Jud‘ān, who is weak (ḍa‘īf).” [al-Atrāf]

In short, the statements of the Imāms on this narrator’s status are numerous are inconsistent, varying from Ḥāfiẓ’s declaration of weakness to Ibn Shaybah’s declaration of reliability.

Although some have cast aspersions on the strength of ‘Alī ibn Zayd as a narrator, in truth he is, *in shā Allāh*, fair (*ḥasan*) in narrating *ḥadīth*. At worst, he is slightly weak. Essentially, the problem scholars of *ḥadīth* had with him was his memory and not with his integrity and truthfulness. Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah discusses him in his footnotes on al-Kāshif and has mentioned *ḥadīths* in which he is a narrator and where Imam Tirmidhī has ruled the *ḥadīth* to be *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ* (fair and sound).

‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Jud‘ānī:

While Ibn ‘Adī says that he is not supported by most of what he narrates, it does not seem that he is very weak. In short, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar concludes regarding him that when ‘Abd al-‘Azīz mentions having heard a narration directly from his *shaykh* (teacher) then it is appropriate to relate his *ḥadīth*. In the case of the chain mentioned above, he does mention having heard the narration directly, so the chain is relatively free from aspersion and is strong enough to corroborate the other narrations. When looked at in their entirety, the numerous chains of this *ḥadīth* certainly raise themselves to the status where they can be mentioned without problem in respect to virtues and encouragement.

After mentioning the *ḥadīth* in his Faḍā’il Ramaḍān, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā al-Kāndhalwī’s summarizes the statements of the scholars of the past regarding the narration and states:

“Ibn Khuzaymah narrates it in his Ṣaḥīḥ and said ‘if the hadith is authentic...’. Bayhaqī narrates it also, as well as Abū Shaykh Ibn Ḥayyān in al-Thawāb concisely. In their chains there is ‘Alī bin Zayd bin Jud‘ān.

Ibn Khuzaymah and Bayhaqī also relate concisely (*bi ikhtisār*) on [‘Alī ibn Zayd’s] authority from the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah. In its chain is Kathīr bin Zayd. In this manner it is mentioned in al-Targhīb pg. 203.

I [Zakariyyā] say: A party has declared him weak. Tirmidhī states that he is *ṣadūq*

(veracious, honest) and has even authenticated a hadith of his which relates to greeting (*salām*). He has also declared sound (*ḥasan*) a number of [his] *aḥādīth*. Many have declared him weak (*ḍaʿīf*), like Nisāʾī and others. Ibn Maʿīn stated: [He is] trustworthy (*thiqah*). Ibn ʿAdī stated: I do not see any problem with his *ḥadīth*. Ibn Khuzaymah has narrated on his authority in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Similarly, [he has been mentioned] in the *Rijāl al-Mundhiri* pg. 704. ʿAynī, however, said: the narration is *munkar* (unfamiliar), so reflect." [Fada'il Ramadan pg. 8]

The *ḥadīth*, therefore, is at worst slightly *ḍaʿīf* (weak), and because it has been narrated regarding *faḍā'il* (virtues and merits) it can be accepted in this case. It should be noted here also that those people who have made it a habit to discourage the practice of relating weak narrations in discourses to the extent that speeches and orations are sometime rudely interrupted by them should reflect over the status of what they are objecting to before they cause *fitnah* amongst the masses. There is a prophetic method to discouraging the wrong, and hasty conclusions regarding narrations based upon isolated opinions of certain scholars should not entice individuals to give up wisdom and resort to disrespect and insolence when confronting fellow believers.