

FROM THE MINBAR

MANNERS OF RAMADAN & SAWM

Khutbah delivered by Imam Dr. Zijad Delic at SNMC on July 13th, 2012 corresponding to Sha'ban 23rd, 1433 H.

BACKGROUND

Indeed all praise is for God, Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings of God be upon Muhammad (S), his family, KhulafaiRashidin, all his Companions, and all those who follow in their footsteps until the Last Day. All praise is for God! We praise Him. We seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. We seek God's refuge from evils of ourselves and from our evil actions. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except God, alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (S) is His Messenger.

My dear brothers and sisters in Islam ~ As Salamu 'AlaikumWaRahmatullahiWaBarakatuhu.

INTRODUCTION

The month of Ramadan is a month of reflection, contemplation, patience and sacrifice. Once we bear these things in mind, it means that we should have a period of retreat to review our work through the year, how far every individual was able to observe his/her religious duties. Was he/she advancing spiritually, theologically and righteously? Or was he/she retreating and falling in these areas?



In the light of these reflections, we start this month of Ramadan with the resolution that we are going to renew our strong bond of relationship with our Creator (Rabb), through the obedience to His words in the Qur'an, and to the tradition of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (S), to be a good example in the society in which we are living, with compassion, honesty, integrity and kindness. That is how we should, when the month of Ramadan visits us, reflect upon our attitude and our reception of the great month.

THE SET OF MANNERS IN RAMADAN

The month of Ramadan comes with the blessings to the Muslims. The reports from the Qur'an and Sunnah encourage us to increase in good actions and following the Messenger Muhammad sallallahu alayhi wa sallam. If we would examine the Sunnah of the Messenger we could find a set of recommendations (manners) for welcoming Ramadan and observing the Sawm.



1. Receiving the news of the arrival of the month of Ramadan with the good intention of fasting with sincere faith and seeking the pleasure of Allah (SWT). One should consider it as opening the new chapter and make a firm determination to use the opportunity for the radical change in one's life equipping himself / herself with all sorts of good deeds. Unfortunate is one who comes out of Ramadan without gaining the Mercy of Allah and His forgiveness. The Messenger of Allah said: "When the month of Ramadan starts, the gate of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the Shaytans are chained." {Bukhari}

What is the meaning of the Hadith? The Hadith may be referring specifically to the Muslim Ummah, that is, the absence of sedition and evil thoughts from the minds of Muslims in the month of Ramadan.

For the Messenger of Allah has said that Shaytan runs through veins like blood and that we can stop him entering into our thoughts and deeds by tightening our veins. Fasting is a means of self-discipline and recognizing that the Shaytan exists inside and outside of us. He whispers to us and incites us constantly to commit sins.

But fasting is like a lock against Shaytan, closing up his access points to the inside. That is why when we look into the Muslim community during Ramadan, evil appears to be very much reduced. Muslims work to improve themselves during the month of Ramadan. Their spiritual awareness is so intense that the Shaytan finds it harder to get the better of them.

2. The pre-down meal - Suhur: One of the blessings during the month of Ramadan is Suhur. It is eating and drinking which can be any time from

the middle of the night until just before dawn. It is much better to have it close to dawn without running the risk of eating or drinking after dawn.

All 'Ulama agree that it is preferred to eat a pre-down meal and that there is no sin upon one who does not do so. It was reported that the Messenger of Allah Muhammad sallallahu alayhi wa sallam has recommended Suhur: "Have Suhur for Suhur is the source of Barakah (blessing)." {Bukhari, Muslim}

The reason why it is a Barakah is that it strengthen the Saim, makes him / her more energetic, and makes the Sawm easier for him / her. It can be as little as a sip of water. The Messenger of Allah said: "The Suhur is blessed, so do not neglect it even if you only take a sip of water. Verily Allah and the Malaikah pray for those who have Suhur." {Ahmad} The Messenger of Allah said: "The distinction between our fasting and the fasting of the people of the book (Jews and Christians) is in taking the Suhur." (Muslim)

3. Hastening in breaking the Sawm - Iftar: It is breaking fast with a light meal, preferably dates (if dates are not available then with any kind of fruits) or water, following with Iqamah for the Magrib prayer, and then taking the regular meal.

The Messenger of Allah Muhammad sallallahu alayhi wa sallam said: "The people will always remain in a good state of mind and body (during Sawm) as long as they hurry in the breaking of the Sawm (Iftar) and delay the Suhur." {Bukhari, Muslim}

It is clear that the purpose of these instructions is to discourage all forms of rigidity and fanaticism, and to teach moderation.

4. Doing good towards others as much as possible for the rewards promised for them are tremendous indeed. The Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever offers food for someone to break his fast, his act will earn him Allah's forgiveness for his sins, and will help to redeem himself from hell fire. He will

This Issue 'From The Minbar' presents:

⇒ **Manners of Ramadan & Sawm**

⇒ **In next issue: Ramadan & Akhlaq**

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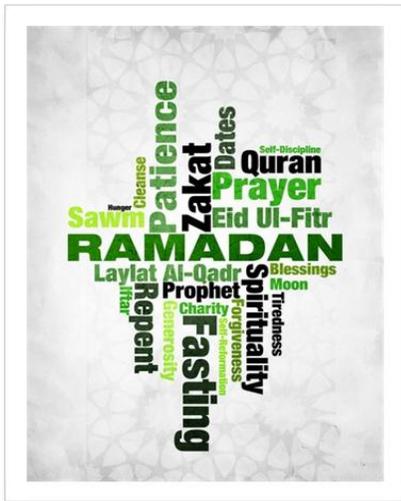
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also reap rewards as the one who has fasted, without reducing from fasting person's reward. The Companion said: "All of us are not in a position to provide food for another to break his fast." He replied: "Allah will bestow the same reward on anyone who offers a date or a cup of milk to his brother to break his fast." {Ibn Khuzaymah}

The Iftar may be taken with the family at home, or friends and relatives may be invited to the Iftar for one who feeds the Saim, as the messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: "Will receive the same reward as him, except that nothing will be reduced from the fasting person's reward." {Ahmad, Ibn Majah, and Ibn Hibban; Sahih}

5. Making Du'a while breaking Sawm: While breaking the Sawm, turn towards Allah, offering special supplications for yourselves and for all Muslims generally, for that is the special hour when the supplications are heard by Allah.

It is confirmed that the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) used to recite frequently the following Du'a after breaking his Sawm: "**Allahumma laka sumtu wa 'ala rizqika aftartu - O Allah! For You I have fasted and with Your provisions do I break my fast.**"



6. Abstinence from obscene and indecent acts as well as mastering the fine virtues of patience, clemency, serenity. Fasting is one of the best acts of worship. It is mandated by Almighty Allah to purify the soul along with the practice of good deeds. Thus the faster ought to be aware of acts or behaviors that may spoil his/her fast so that he/she will attain the highest benefit physically and spiritually.

Fasting is not only restraining oneself from fast-breakers - food, drink and sexual relationship with one's spouse - that restrain only the mouth (stomach) and the private parts.

Every limb must be restrained. The tongue must desist from backbiting, mocking, lying, slandering, yelling, screaming, shouting. The eyes must restrain themselves from any unlawful look. The hand must not touch or take what does not belong to it. The ears must not listen to idle talk. The nose must fast also by not sniffing and smelling unlawful things. The feet must fast by not going to the places where sinful acts are propagated.

The Messenger of Allah Muhammad sallallahu alayhi wa sallam said: "He who does not refrain from speaking falsehood and acting by it, Allah does not require of him to give up eating and drinking." {Bukhari}

In other Hadith, the Messenger of Allah says that many of fasters will go unrewarded for their fasting because of the seriousness of the false talk which they practiced during their fasting: "There are many who fast but gain nothing out of their fast except hunger and thirst, and many who pray at night and gain nothing from out of their praying except sleeplessness." {Bukhari, Nasai and Hakim}

If someone does wrong to you, meet it with what is superior, more excellent, and remind yourself of the proper Islamic moral and observe the fine quality of a Saim. Abu Hurayrah (raa) reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "Fasting is not only abstaining from eating and drinking, but also from vain speech and foul language. If one of you is being cursed or annoyed, he should say: "I am fasting, I am fasting." {Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Hibban, Al Hakim; Sahih}

All these Ahadith are evidence that the most important thing in the sight of Almighty Allah is not merely physically restraining from the obvious food and drink, but the total commitment of the servant's body and soul to the letter and spirit of fasting.

The curfew of the body and mind during the state of fasting enables the person who has fasted in the true spirit of Ramadan to have the necessary requirements to withstand the turbulence of life for the next eleven months.

7. Devoting the time to the reading and studying the Qur'an during both days and nights in the month of Ramadan and implementing these teachings. Ramadan is the month of the Qur'an. It is recommended to study the Qur'an during all the times, but it is especially stressed during the month of Ramadan. The Messenger of Allah said: "In every night of Ramadan Jibril used to visit me and teach me the Qur'an." {Bukhari, Muslim}

8. Not letting the month of Ramadan be a month of laziness and idleness. It would be unfair to the spirit of fasting to make the month of Ramadan a source of lagging behind in work, and being unproductive.

It would be unfair to the spirit of fasting that a person sleeps through day and stays awoken through night. Ramadan is the month of Sabr, during which a believer arms himself with a weapon of will power and determination and applies himself diligently to all sorts of constructive works.

The Messenger of Allah said to the Sahabah: "During the month of Ramadan, Allah will cover you with His Grace, and His Mercy will descend upon you, and all your sins will be dropped, and prayers will receive ready answer. Allah will look upon your endeavors to compete with one another for good works during this month, and he will boast with His angels on account of you. So strive to show good to Allah, for one who does not do so, he is doomed." {At Tabarani}

9. Being extra careful in securing Halal food for the month of Ramadan as well as avoid all forms of excess and wastage in food and drink. Halal food is a requirement throughout the year and in the month of Ramadan which is an excellent opportunity to examine the sources of our living, we must be much more careful.

Abstaining from Halal during the day and breaking the fast with Haram to a Muslim does not make sense. On the other side fasting for whole day and at the end of the day go over the limits in taking food and wasting it is not the spirit of Fasting (Ramadan).

10. Diligence in 'Ibadah during the last ten days in the month of Ramadan. 'Aisha (raa) said: "When the last ten days of Ramadan would come, the Messenger (SAWS) would maintain 'Ibadah during the night and engage members of his family in the same practices." {Bukhari}

In the address of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (S) on the last day of Sha'ban he has said: "Anyone who comes closer to Allah through a good deed during this month is as if he/she performed an obligatory duty (Faridah) during times other than Ramadan, and he/she who fulfills an obligatory duty in it will be like one who fulfills seventy obligatory duties in another month." {Ibn Khuzaymah}

CONCLUSION

Ramadan undoubtedly helps true believers remold, reshape, reform, and renew their physical and spiritual disposition and behavior. It helps them improve themselves and cleans the Muslims from the sins and brings them nearer to Allah and people, and makes them more dear to Him and people.

AN ACTION ITEM

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