

Friday Khutbah: Reception of Ramadan – Rights of Neighbours
Friday 21/06/2013

Servants of Allah! Have *Tawqa* of Allah and thank Him for the blessing of the approach of the month of fasting and *Qiyam*. Ask Him with humble hearts to keep you safe and to enable you to fast Ramadan – and to accept it from you.

You should receive Ramadan with rejoice and happiness, and praise and gratitude to Allah as He says (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*): Say: "In the Bounty of Allâh, and in His Mercy -therein let them rejoice. That is better than that (wealth) they accumulate." (*Yunus* 58)

Your Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) used to give glad tidings to his companions on the approach of Ramadan by way of stimulating them to look forward to the great bounty of Allah in Ramadan. In the *Hadith* reported by *Ubadah Ibn as-Samit*, may Allah be pleased with him, the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said: "Ramadan has come upon you, a month of blessings! Allah sends down His mercy in it, wipes out sins and accepts *dua*'. Allah looks at your competing in it and boasts about you among His angels. Show Allah the goodness of yourselves in it. A miserable person is indeed he who is deprived of the mercy of Allah in it."

In *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*, *Abu Hurairah*, may Allah be pleased with him, said: The Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said: "When Ramadan comes the gates of *al-Jannah* are opened and the gates of *an-Nar* are closed and the *Shayateen* are chained up.

What is meant by the gates of *Jannah* are opened is that: actions leading to *al-Jannah* become easier – unless a person is deprived.

What is meant by the gates of *an-Nar* are closed is that: actions leading to *an-Nar* become more difficult or less easy- unless a person is wretched.

What is meant by the *Shayateen* are chained up is: the they are unable to mislead people as they would do in other times.

Ramadan is indeed a noble occasion and a great opportunity! It is a filling station for the soul which every Muslim needs and the *Ummah* as a whole needs. It is a training institution for the renewal of *Iman* and control of appetites. It is a race course in which people compete in obedience and righteous deeds.

Al-Hassan said: Allah made the month of Ramadan a race course for his creations - for them to compete in it in His obedience to achieve His pleasure. Some people raced and they succeeded, and others hung back and failed. So, it is astonishing to see someone playing and laughing on the day when the workers will succeed and the useless will lose. So for this let those aspire, who have aspirations."

Last Friday I spoke about the words Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) in *surat al-layl*: "Indeed, the aims you strive for are diverse..." and the realisation of this *ayah* as manifested in the attitudes of people towards Ramadan; the way they receive it and the way they act during it based on the level of their *Iman* and certainty.

I mentioned some examples of different attitudes. In addition to I have said, people also differ in their perception of Ramadan. Some see it as nothing other than

deprivation; hunger and thirst. Others perceive it as an annual food festival and perhaps would eat more food in it than in other months.

Some see Ramadan as an opportunity for night chatting and playing followed by long sleep during the day. When one of them goes to work he is tired, impatient and ineffective.

Ramadan is not meant for such aims which totally defeat its purpose.

On the other hand there many in the *Ummah* – perhaps the majority who perceive Ramadan differently. They see as an opportunity to take a provision of good deeds, to renew their *Iman* and to turn to Allah in *Tawba* from all sins - and who of us is without sins?

Allah says in the Qur'an: "..... And repent to Allah O believers, all of you, so that You may succeed." (*Surat an-Nur* 31) i.e. *Tubah* is for everyone not only of those whom we think they are wrong-doers.

So, take Ramadan seriously, prepare for it and strive during it without feeling uneasy about its fasting and *Qiyam*. You must be very careful not to commit anything that invalidates it or wastes its reward – whether it is physical or moral.

Imam al-Bukhari reported the *Hadith* in which *Abu Hurairah*, may Allah be pleased with him, said: The Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said: "Whoever does not give up false saying and false action and ignorant behaviour, Allah is not in need of him giving up his food and drink."

Jabir Ibn Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said: "When you fast let your hearing and sight fast (from the *Haram*), and your tongue from lying."

Hafsa Bint Siyreen said: "Fasting is a shield (protection) unless one tears it. It is backbiting that tears it."

Maymoon Ibn Mahran said: "The lowest form of fasting is to give up food and drink."

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Second *Khutbah*:

The religion of Islam commands Muslims to be good neighbours whether your neighbour is a Muslim who is related or not related or is a non-Muslim.

Jibril, alaihis-Salam continued to counsel and remind your Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) about the right of the neighbour until he thought that *Jibril* was going to include the neighbour with the heirs (who inherit one.) This shows how significant the right of the neighbour is.

Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) had explained in a number of his *Hadith* a number of the rights of the neighbour. *Moawiya Ibn Haidah, radhiya Allahu 'anhu*, said: "I said: What is his (neighbour) right, O Messenger of Allah! He said: "If he falls sick, you should visit him, if he dies you should follow his funeral, if he asks you for a loan you should lend him, if he is in need you should give him, if something good happens to him you should congratulate him, if a calamity happens to him you should condole him. You should not make your building high and thus block the passage of the wind to his house except with his permission. Do not harm him with

the smell of your food unless you give him from it. When you buy fruits, you should give him some of it, otherwise you should take it secretly into your house and your child should not take it outside and tease his child.

These are just a few examples of the rights of the neighbour. All forms of kind treatment of the neighbour are part of the right of the neighbour in Islam.

Since most of our neighbours in this country are non-Muslim, you can imagine the good impression about Islam and Muslims which fulfilling some of these rights would leave upon them

Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) himself showed us how a Muslim should treat his non-Muslim neighbours. Once he (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) went to visit a sick Jewish boy who was a neighbour of him. When the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) saw that the boy was very sick and was about to die, he became very concerned for him. He said to the boy: “Say *La ilahi illa Allah*, and will intercede on your behalf before Allah.” The boy looked at his father and he was shy. His father said to him: “Listen to Abul Qasim and say it”, and he said it before his death.

This *Hadith* shows that the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) was very keen to care for his neighbour.

These neighbours of ours at our residences, places of work and in other places have rights upon us, and perhaps Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) will ask us about their right – if we have fulfilled it or not.

The month of Ramadan is a good opportunity to inform others about fasting and about Islam in general especially now the fasting of Ramadan has become very famous and widely known. So, no Muslim should be shy and hide his fasting, prayer or any aspect of Islam. He/she should rather make the rites and facts of Islam known to everyone.

One of the most basic and important rights of the neighbour is not to harm him in any way. If there is any Muslim who harms his neighbour by causing noise or loud voices or by blocking the passages – then this is indeed very shameful. If a Muslim fails to deliver good to his neighbour, then at least he should not harm him

Since we are approaching the month of Ramadan and there will be more people coming to the *Masjid* during its days and nights, you should have *Taqwa* of Allah with regard to your duties towards your neighbours. Do not harm them with loud voices at late night. Your attendance of *Taraweeh* prayers is not an excuse for annoying the neighbours. When you come to the Mosque, you should observe the rules of traffic and parking. You should not block the road passages. Do not stand outside after *Taraweeh* and *Fajr* prayers talking to each other and causing noise. Pray and leave quietly. Do not waste your reward by harming your neighbours.

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