

## Striving to respond to the call of the Last Ten Days

Friday Khutbah (5<sup>th</sup> October 2007) delivered by Shaykh Muhammad Taher

DISCLAIMER: This reminder was originally delivered in Arabic. Any meanings lost in translation are not to be attributed to the speaker as reminders are translated by volunteers. The mosque has no official translator and volunteers often have no formal qualifications to translate on the day. Please forgive any errors as they are from our human weakness and any right guidance is from God.

The days and nights of this blessed month are coming to an end, one by one. They will be a witness over what deeds you have done. Each deed is preserved for you as though it is in a protected treasure chest guarded by the month of Ramadan.

On the Day of Resurrection your Lord will call out:

"O my servants, it is but your deeds that I account for you and then recompense you for. So for he who finds good, let him praise God. And for he who finds other than that let him blame no one other than himself." [Muslim]

This is our month and this is its end. How many people who were hopeful for the future did not get to see its completion?

O Muslims - if there is something in your soul that acts as an obstacle or something in your heart that needs rectifying - there are still a few days of Ramadan left [to remove those obstacles and rectify your hearts].

These last few days that our beloved prophet treated like a special guest. With the twenty before he would pray and sleep; however, when the last ten would enter, he would tighten his belt, he would leave his bed and he would awake his family, knocking on the door of Ali and Fatima (may God be pleased with them) asking - are you both not getting up so you can pray? And he would recite:

"Enjoin prayer on your people and be diligent in its observance. We demand nothing of you; instead We provide you sustenance. Blessed shall be the end of the Righteous." [Ta Ha 20:132]

and then he would go towards the rooms of his wives and would call their inhabitants to "wake up, many a woman who is well dressed in this life, finds herself bare [of provision in good deeds] in the life to come." [Muslim]

O Muslims - it is as though these last ten days are calling us and saying: "I am the last ten days of Ramadan, do you know the significance of my being here? I bring you a warning for those who are intelligent and seeking this month because this month is about to depart."

This is a reality - for everyone who loves this month - a sadness is about to come that will be felt on its leaving - sadness from losing the sweetness felt in worship, soundness of the heart and purity of the soul that was found within it.

Ponder upon a second lesson to learn from the end of this month. The prophet SAW informed us that deeds are judged by their endings.

"The servant may do the works of the people of Hell but he is really one of the people of Paradise. And he may do the works of the people of Paradise when he is really of the people of Hell. Actions are judged by their endings."  
[Bukhari]

So it is strange that people who strove so hard at the beginning of the month now near the end of the month but are too preoccupied from seeking its rewards. They are distracted with chasing after things that bring no benefit, too busy to pray in congregation, to pray night prayers, to pray Fajr or recite Qur'an - so if you are one of these people, remember that deeds are by their endings.

[And the last ten days also say to us:] "it is from the mercy of God, oh Muslims that God has chosen the night of Lailatul Qadr to be between these ten nights out of all the nights of the year. Can you comprehend what Lailatul Qadr is? It is the night that God has distinguished from all the nights of the year by descending His Book in it from the Preserved Tablet to your hands on this earth. And He informed us in His saying:

"that We revealed this Qur'an in a blessed night; for We wanted to forewarn mankind."

And in this blessed night a great event happened, the All knowing, all merciful tells us:

"In that night everything wise was made distinct [meaning that after this blessed night, we received the provision of a criterion to discern between good and evil]" [ad Dukhan 44:3,4]

"Surely We have revealed this (Qur'an) in the night of Qadr. And what will make you understand, what the night of Qadr is! The night of Qadr is better than one thousand months. The angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) come down with every decree, by the leave of their Lord that night is the night of Peace, till the break of dawn." [al Qadr 97:1-5]

In this blessed night God is more generous with His reward and multiplies it greatly as He says:

"The night of Qadr is better than one thousand months."

So how great a gift this is. Dedicating this one night to God is better than dedicating all [the nights of] your whole life as [this one night] is better than 83 $\frac{1}{3}$  years. You may not even reach this age - and even if you did, could you have spent it all in worship?

But this is not all, regarding this night - listen to what the Prophet SAW informed us:

"Whoever establishes the prayers on the night of Qadr out of sincere faith and hoping to attain God's rewards (not to show off) then all his past sins will be forgiven." [Bukhari]

God is great, by praying in this one night you are forgiven all that you have done of sins and mistakes throughout your whole life. So where are the [seekers of forgiveness], whose hearts are alive to the feeling of their wrongs and their sins.

O Muslims - indeed this is a great reward but no one actually knows which night Laylatul Qadr. Nonetheless, whoever prays the ten nights in full - he can be assured that within one of them was the night of Laylatul Qadr [and do not forget the] prophet SAW's advice:

"whoever stays with the Imam until he completes the prayer, will have the night written for him as one who stood the night in prayer" [Tirmidhi]

The people of knowledge together incline towards two evidences that suggest the night of Laylatul Qadr is within the last ten nights of Ramadan and it is of the odd nights. So know that the night could still be within the remainder of this month. So ask God, Lord of the great throne, to make you find that night and to bless us with praying within it and to accept it from us.

In the Second Reminder - the Shaykh gave six advices to those who desire to do good in the last few days of Ramadan:

1. pray the dawn prayer (fajr) in its time and if you are able, pray it with the congregation in the mosque. The prophet SAW informed us that whosoever was sleeping when the sun rose wakes up lazy and dejected. If this is how he begins his day, then how can he gain goodness in the rest of his day!

2. start your day with the remembrance of God - for example a daily morning remembrance and saying:

"there is no God other than Allah/God, the One, he does not have any partners, to him belongs the dominion and to Him belongs all praise and he is over everything all powerful."

The prophet SAW encouraged us to recite this 100 times - but why? Abu Hurayra relates that the Messenger of God, said, [Muwatta]

"Whoever says 'There is no god but Allah, alone, without any partner. The Kingdom and praise belong to Him and He has power

over everything' (La ilaha illa'llah, wahdahu la sharika lah, lahu'l mulku wa lahu'l hamd, wa huwa ala kulli shay'in qadir) one hundred times a day, it is the same for him as freeing ten slaves, one hundred good actions are written for him and one hundred wrong actions are erased from him and it is a protection from Shaytan for that day until the night. No-one does anything more excellent than what he does except someone who does more than that."

3. do not prevent your tongue from continuously asking from God (making du'a) and [during these days, ask] in particular - 'O God you are forgiving, you love to forgive, so forgive us' (allahuma afuwan, tuhibu aff, fa'fa'fuanna) - and say this as much as you can.
4. increase mention of the Master of the supplications of Forgiveness - 'O Allah/God you are my Lord, there is no God except You. You created me and I am your slave. And uphold your covenant and promise as best I can. I seek your protection against the evil that I have committed, I acknowledge your blessing upon me and I acknowledge my sin, so forgive me for none can forgive sins except you.'

The prophet SAW said regarding this, that 'whoever says this and dies during that day or the night, he will enter Paradise'.

5. remember death - the destroyer of pleasures - so perhaps your eyes will shed tears and you will be from the seven who will be under God's shade on the day there will be no shade except His shade. The prophet SAW described this person as the one who remembers God in seclusion and his eyes fill with tears. Our days are but few and our lives are short - we do not know when it will come to an end, perhaps we won't even see the end of this Ramadan! Even if we do, perhaps it will be the last Ramadan of our lives.
6. remember the saying of the prophet SAW who said: "Jibreel came to me and said  
'O Muhammad, if someone reaches the month of Ramadan and then dies but is not forgiven (for making full use of the month), so may God cast him away and he will enter Hell fire, Say Ameen', so I said 'Ameen'".

These ten [days and nights] are a treasure and within this month there is still opportunity but once missed it will not return for the person who does not grab it

So, muslims, it is upon us to take a share in these blessings that Ramadan brings and to be steadfast in our fasting, prayers and doing of good deeds. How many people did not live to see this month? For how many people did Ramadan pass as

though it was just another month due to their suffering from ill health. And how many failed to keep to the straight path and so merely caused themselves to be even more remote from God and more at a loss?

But if God made you steadfast in your fasting and prayers so you benefited from Ramadan, then praise and thank God for this blessing and now build upon this in the best way that you can.

(allahuma afuwan, tuhibu aff, fa'fa'fuanna)

'O God you are forgiving, you love to forgive, so forgive us'