

Friday Sermon

HADHRAT MUHYI-UD-DIN AL-KHALIFATULLAH
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After greeting all his disciples (and all Muslims) worldwide with the greeting of peace Hadhrat Khalifatullah (atba) read the Tashahhud, Ta'uz, Surah Al Fatiha, and then he delivered his sermon on "Prescriptions for a Good Ramadan":

Ramadan has come once again! The one who has the opportunity to witness its arrival, has most certainly received one of the greatest favours from Allah (swt). Being present in this world during the month of Ramadan is meaningless as long as the servant does not know how to enjoy its immense benefits, which no one should ignore. Ramadan as the fourth pillar of Islam is an act of worship of great importance and charged with many benefits.

There is, firstly, its spiritual aspect, namely the *Taqwa* (piety/ fear of God). The Muslim is bound to cultivate piety (and the fear of Allah) in himself. Then there are its economic, medical and social aspects. Ramadan is an act of worship whose benefits affect not only the individual but also the society, the country and even the whole world. The existence of a society is essential, for without it life does not exist in its true sense. In order for this to happen, life skills are very important. Every individual must know the task that is under his or her responsibility, in the construction of society and the role he/ she must play. The month of Ramadan is

undoubtedly an ideal opportunity to put into practice the teachings of Islam in order to establish an exemplary society. Its social benefits are many, including:

1) Ramadan helps the servants to strengthen the brotherhood between them. Today we live in a society where hatred, jealousy, enmity etc. have taken place in the hearts of many Muslims. Sectarianism, division, dissension, etc. have demolished the unity commanded by the Creator.

“Truly, this community of yours is a unique community, and I am your Lord. So worship Me. And (yet) they were divided into sects. But all of them will return to Us.” (Al-Anbiya 21: 93-94).

With a little wisdom, reflection and understanding, Muslims can transform this deplorable state into another better, where brotherhood resurfaces. They have only to understand one idea: **“Allah loves unity and hates dissension.”**

They are bound to know that the mercy of Allah will never reach this community as long as they do not unite and that brotherhood does not take place in the hearts. How can a Muslim fast without realizing the true meaning of brotherhood when Allah (swt) has said:

“Believers are but brothers. Establish concord between your brethren, and fear Allah, that you may be shown mercy.” (Al-Hujurat 49: 11).

2) Ramadan is the month of generosity. It invites believers to do charity. Certainly, relieving our poor brothers and sisters is our duty, for Allah (swt) has sent down His favours in an unequal manner as a trial. Some are richer than others. The fast of Ramadan reminds the believer of the hunger and thirst of so many humans who are victims of famine and drought. Thousands of people are victims of these disasters every day. When the believer realizes the many favours that Allah (swt) has bestowed on him, he extends his hand to relieve the needy from his country or elsewhere. In this way he fulfils the word of the prophet (pbuh): *“(Ramadan) is the month of comfort.”*

3) Sins always have a bad influence on society and lead to bad consequences. Islam, as we all know, has forbidden games of chance, theft, corruption, injustice, consumption of alcoholic drinks, drugs, witchcraft, the desecration of the marriage institution, (For example, there are such men, although already married,

who courts the wives of others, whether in workplaces or elsewhere, by approaching too closely the preliminaries of adultery by establishing a pseudo camaraderie to approach these women, and vice versa); in short everything that encourages dishonour at the level of the individual, his faith in one God, his family and society in general.

When Muslims observe the fast of Ramadan (for they must do it with *Taqwa*), all these things are all the more forbidden in the sense that fasters must preserve their fasting (*Sawm*) by abandoning what is forbidden, otherwise, their fasting will have no value and they will be deprived of the reward.

When the fasters keep away from sins, society is purified; it becomes healthy, enjoys multiple favours from Allah (swt) and is protected from calamities. If such are the many benefits of Ramadan, it is up to us to live this month as a true Muslim. Let us hold each other's hands to raise the level of our society and work together to strengthen the social fabric that has so weakened lately. May Allah (swt) have mercy on us and help us to realize the true values of Ramadan, namely unity, love and brotherhood. *Ameen*.

Given the inestimable value of the month of Ramadan, it is the duty of every believer to live this blessed month in total submission to the Supreme Creator. Since our main goal is to get closer to Allah (swt) we are all called to depart from the prohibitions and from any act that would take us away from the thought (remembrance) of the Creator.

What to do? Multiply acts of worship such as supererogatory prayers (*Nafil Salat*), read the Quran, perform *dua'as* (supplication to Allah), remain in the *Zikr* (Remembrance) of Allah among others, wake up at night to accomplish the *Salat-ul-Tahajjud*, generously give food to the poor and the disinherited, support the weak economically, socially etc., and give firm support to any commendable project for the good of the community (both spiritual, that is, at Jamaat / Islam level, and also globally speaking, that is, the whole country and the world community in general). And we must accomplish these while helping to fight evil, no matter where it comes from. We must also maintain the Islamic atmosphere at home, encourage our families to take advantage of this highly blessed month, help the little ones to recognize the priority of this golden opportunity and cultivate enthusiasm to make the most of this month.

What is necessary to avoid at all costs: Sleeping excessively, at night as well as during the day. Losing one's time in futile dialogues, either at the exit of the mosques, at the corners of the street, at the local shops, in one's own home, or through mobile phones, Smart phones - through messaging, chatting and email. We must avoid spending long hours in front of the TV - small screen or life size one (cinema screen - home cinema) to kill time. Losing time in the kitchen. Do not cook more than you need. Avoid daily preparation of succulent dishes, as the woman loses precious time and gets tired. Also avoid window shopping, daily shopping to kill time. All this should not be on the agenda of the believer who wants to get closer to Allah (swt). One must not also rush into reading the Quran to finish the thirty parts as soon as possible. Focus should be on quality (quality reading with deep concentration and understanding of the words of Allah). Staying away from slander, calumny, dishonesty, cunning, lies and any shameful act that diminishes the value of fasting, or at worst, makes it vain. Family disputes that would disrupt the Islamic atmosphere at home.

So who knows, maybe this is the last Ramadan we are living! Let us live it with an intention to bid farewell to this world. O Ramadan! Restore life to our society by your coming, enrich us with the blessings and divine benefits that God has preserved in you for the salvation of His believing and obedient servants. O Allah, makes this Ramadan an exceptional Ramadan, bringing us closer to You, and a foretaste of Your eternal mercy for us in this world and the next. *Insha-Allah, Ameen.*