

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



## Friday Sermon

*Hazrat Khalifatullah Munir. A. Azim (atba)*

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After greeting all his disciples (and all Muslims) worldwide with the greeting of peace Hazrat Khalifatullah (atba) read the Tashahhud, Ta'uz, Surah Al Fatiha, and then he delivered his sermon on:

### *The Night of Destiny and Spiritual Retreat (Pt.2)*

During the holy month of Ramadan, believers seek divine favours and all opportunities to draw closer to Allah (twa), through whatever Allah has ordained as *Farz* (obligatory) and *Nafil* (supererogatory) as well. The reward for a supererogatory work during Ramadan becomes equal to that of a compulsory work, and the compulsory work is rewarded even more.

As believers, we must always seek out all that is good for us in this world, and in the hereafter. We recite this prayer (*duah*) as follows: **Rabbana atina fi d-dunya hassanatan w-wa fi-l-aakhirati hasanatan w-waqina 'adhaba n-naar.** *Our Lord! Grant us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the chastisement of the fire. [Ameen].*

The believer always prays in this way [he recites this invocation often], where he seeks what will benefit his physical body in this world, and also what will benefit his soul, in the spiritual sense [in the field of spirituality]. And when one day he has to appear before Allah, he will come to Allah with a pure soul. This invocation has great significance when we analyze it in depth.

When we seek everything that is good for us on this earth, it does not mean that we seek great wealth or property, but everything that will be useful to us, physically and spiritually, on earth and beyond (in the afterlife). What is this 'good' that we are looking for? We are not only looking for the minimum so that we can live decently on earth, but we are looking for what will benefit us in the field of spirituality. We immerse ourselves in spirituality where we perform [do] everything Allah has told us to do, and then when we follow Allah's instructions, then we will return to Allah with the purified soul, as pure as He had created us.

During the holy month of Ramadan, believers have the opportunity to get closer to Allah by fasting and praying. The day starts early for them because they have to leave their comfortable bed about two hours before the first light of dawn.

[They don't sleep, like in some countries, until very late. There are people who observe the fast and believe that it means to eat until very late at night, to have a feast, and take this meal as if it was their meal before dawn (*Sehri*) and they go to sleep, without waking up, not even to perform their prayers and they will not wake up until very late - they believe that this is how they should fast the month of Ramadan, but in truth they do not really know the true Ramadan philosophy!]

After having made their *Salaat* (prayers) of Tahajjud, they take their meal (*Sahur / Sehri*) then go to do their *Fajr* prayer Fajr at the mosque. But in these days of lockdown in most countries of the world, the household of believers has turned into a mosque, with the head of the house - the father or the son - taking the lead to direct the prayers and to transform the house into a haven of peace. They invoke Allah with this prayer: **Rabbana hab lana min azwaajina wa dhurriyyatina qurrata a'yunin-waj'alna li-l-muttaqina imaama.** *Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example [Imam/ leader] for the righteous. [Ameen].*

After the *Salaat*, in melodious and touching voices [which touch their hearts and those of others] believers recite the Holy Quran. Our beloved prophet (pbuh) redoubled the recitation of the Holy Quran during the month of Ramadan. Archangel Gabriel came down to recite the Qur'an with him. (Bukhari).

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, "*Fasting and the Quran will intercede for the servant on the Day of Resurrection. Fasting will say: 'O Lord, I prevented him from*

*food and drink during the day, so let me intercede for him'. The Quran will say: 'O Lord, I prevented him from sleeping during the night, so let me intercede for him'. Thus, they will both intercede for him."* (Ahmad, Nasai)

During the day, believers must continue their daily occupation but more than ever their hearts remain attached to Allah, to *Zikr* and to the recitation of the Holy Quran especially during the last ten days of Ramadan, hoping to acquire the exceptional blessings of Allah during the Night of Destiny (*Lailatul Qadr*).

Sunset is expected with the call of the muezzin for the Maghrib prayer (the prayer offered just after sunset). Everyone who has fasted starts taking food again; their hearts are filled with thankfulness to Allah, Who by His grace and mercy has given them the opportunity to fast according to His will.

After the *Salaat* of *Isha* (the last prayer offered in the evening), eight *Rakaat* of *Tarawih* prayers are offered plus the three cycles of *Witr*. If you are sure that you are going to do the Tahajjud early before the *Sehri*, then you may skip [not do] the *Witr* after the eight *Rakaat* of *Tarawih* and you are going to make and complete your Tahajjud *Salaat* with the *Witr*.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said: *"He who spends the night in prayer, as a sign of his faith and in anticipation of its reward, will have his previous sins forgiven."* (Bukhari, Muslim).

During Ramadan, it is recommended to do good works (charity in particular). Our beloved prophet (pbuh) said, *"The best charity is that done during Ramadan."* (Tirmidhi).

In addition, he (pbuh) said, *"Whoever gives food or drink to someone who is fasting from lawfully acquired property, the angels keep praying for him during Ramadan. Archangel Gabriel prays for him the Night of Destiny."* (Bukhari).

When the last ten nights of Ramadan come, the one who intended for *Itikaf* retires to the mosque for concentrated worship of Allah. In these times of lockdown, when we cannot go to the mosque, except of course if the mosque is close to us, then the one who made his intention for the *Itikaf* prepares himself to enter this state on the 20<sup>th</sup> night of the Ramadan, or even sooner if desired.

*Itikaf* is spending some time in prayer, be in a mosque (where congregational prayer is read regularly) or a house where congregational prayer is possible, with the sole intention to focus on prayer and contemplation of Allah and forgetting all worldly relationships. He dedicates himself to the remembrance of Allah. He spends all his time glorifying Allah and He [Allah] opens the doors of His spiritual treasures to him, then begins the manifestation of such lights that people of this world cannot conceive. If the retreat is observed with solemnity, it could then become the best of acts of devotion.

According to Hazrat Aisha (ra), a person who observes *Itikaf* should not visit the sick, participate in a *Janaza* (funeral ceremony/ procession) or to visit their husband or wife. The person goes out only for their natural needs or to go to the mosque or place of worship.

When I was in Jamaat Ahmadiyya, if it happened that the Friday prayer (*Jumu'ah*) was done in another place; for example, years ago, we did the *Jumu'ah* in the central mosque and then those who observed *Itikaf* in the small mosques had to move, where a transport was made available for them to go perform the *Jumu'ah* and then they were returned to their place of spiritual retreat immediately after the *Jumu'ah* ended. Personally, I do not agree with this practice [of making those in retreat travelling long distances etc.] and this is not according to the Hadith mentioned. I had even proposed that instead of moving these people for the *Jumu'ah*, why not have someone come and perform the *Jumu'ah* among them in these mosques, or even, why not give them the sermon so that one of them (those who are in retreat - in each mosque) can do it? It is not difficult because these people will not have sermons to prepare, because there is one same sermon which is made everywhere on the island, in all the branches. This is an example that I give you.

In addition, one must know how to observe the *Itikaf*. Many times I have observed people who are supposedly on a spiritual retreat, but only they make people buy cigarettes for them, and as soon as they break their fast, they go on the balcony [of the mosque] to smoke. There was even a friend who was so addicted to his cigarette, that after the meal before dawn [for fasting], and before *Azaan* (the call to prayer) for *Fajr*, he smoked a cigarette quickly, and as soon as

he broke the fast, he ran towards his cigarette. So, all of this is not the true spirit of *Itikaf* and fasting in general.

His spiritual gains [when the believer correctly observes the *Itikaf*] are beyond description. According to a Hadith: He who approaches one span nearer to Allah, Allah approaches him one cubit nearer. Allah said [in a *Hadith-e-Qudsi* - reported from the mouth of the prophet (pbuh)]: “If he [My Servant] comes to Me walking, I go to him running.” (Muslim)

To savour the pleasure of proximity to Allah, the believer then transforms into an image of complete devotion.

Hazrat Aisha (ra) reports that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) did *Itikaf* during the last ten days of Ramadan until his death. After his death, his wives also adopted this tradition. In summary, this month has multiple benefits and rewards. And for those who withdraw themselves from others [go into retreat] for the worship of Allah, there is the gift known as “*Lailatul Qadr*”.

**Lailatul Qadr** is that glorious night when the Holy Qur’an was first revealed. Allah has revealed an exclusive Chapter [in the Qur’an] on the Night of Destiny [*Lailatul Qadr*]. Allah says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٣﴾ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٤﴾ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٥﴾ تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَكِ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٦﴾ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٧﴾

**Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Rahiim; ‘Innaaa ‘anzalnaahu fii lay-latil-Qadr: Wa maaa ‘adraakamaa Laylatul-Qadr? Laylatul-Qadri khayrum-min ‘alfi shahr. Tanazzalul-malaaa ‘ikatu war-Ruuhu fiihaa bi-’izni-Rabbihih-min kulli ‘amr: Salaamun Hiya hattaa matla-’il-Fajr.**

“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Indeed, We sent the Qur’an down during the Night of Decree. And what can make you know what is the Night of Decree? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter. Peace it is until the emergence of dawn.” (Al-Qadr 97: 1-6)

The meaning of this *Surah* is very vast, but in short I will comment only on its last part, because if we reflect well on these verses, Allah makes us understand that He will send the *Ruh'il Quddus* [the Holy Spirit] on His chosen servant, and this in itself is a *Lailatul Qadr*, where you acquire divine peace that descends from heaven. This atmosphere is in itself extraordinary, just like the coming of a Messenger of Allah. When you acquire this *Lailatul Qadr*, then remember that you are a very lucky person because you have successfully recognized and accepted this Messenger and you too are participating [giving your contribution] to spread peace, and then above all you must be yourselves in peace. There should be neither jealousy for others, nor avarice, nor greed for the goods of this world. This is where you need to make a preparation where you imperatively transform your life and take full advantage of these blessings, and you make sure that these blessings remain with you throughout your life.

The Night of Destiny is indeed a great destiny, because in the darkness [of an era] Allah sends His Messenger, where he comes, he descends with a light. Just as the sun breaks darkness, likewise with the advent of this Messenger, he breaks that darkness and transmits light, and he makes seekers of truth and believers live in peace.

So the **Lailatul Qadr** has a very broad meaning. The most acceptable is that during the month of Ramadan, especially during the last ten nights, there is a night when prayers [valid prayers of course] are more accepted. According to the words of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), one must seek the *Lailatul Qadr* during the odd nights of the days of Ramadan. It is also reported that the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) said that the *Lailatul Qadr* (Night of Destiny) should be sought during the 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan. Look for it more during the 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> nights).

In short, it's a night filled with blessing. The person who experiences *Lailatul Qadr* is considered very fortunate. There are no words to describe this blessing, this great opportunity.

Allah (swt) brought down Surah Al-Qadr highlighting this blessed night by meaning that if the followers of Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) do the *Ibaadat* on this sacred night, their *Ibaadat* will be better than a thousand months of *Ibaadat*. This is indeed a huge gift [extraordinary gift] from the goodness of Allah!

Hazrat Anas bin Malik (ra) reports that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said at the approach of Ramadan: “*This month has come to you, and in it there is a night that is better than a thousand months. Whoever is deprived of it is deprived of all goodness, and no one is deprived of its goodness except one who is truly deprived.*” (Ibn Majah, Mishkaat)

The Night of *Qadr* is the most superior and chief of all nights, and we can understand this, among other things, in two ways:

- 1) *Qadr* means destiny and as we recite in the last *Kalima*, we believe in destiny.
- 2) *Qadr* also means power. As Allah repeatedly tells us in the Holy Quran: ***Wallaahu ala kulli shay-'in Qadiir***: Allah is mighty over all things.

The *Ummah* of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was so honoured by the attribution of this great night because not only can they reap more than a thousand months of *Ibaadat*, but also no people [or followers] of the other prophets had obtained a similar night.

By wisdom, Allah (swt) did not openly reveal to us this night but just clarified to us that this blessed night is hidden in the last ten nights of the blessed month of Ramadan, so that the Muslims make efforts to seek it. In this way, they will make full efforts in their *Ibaadat* (acts of worship) during the last third of Ramadan.

Remember that Ramadan is a month of patience. In Surat Al-Imran, in the last verse, verse 201, Allah says: **“O you who believe, persevere and endure and remain stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful !”**

See how Allah has addressed the believers, people who have faith (*Imaan*). And this month of Ramadan is a month of patience where for everything you have to bear with patience, even if someone is looking for a fight with you, even if someone swears you [saying foul words], and in all situations, you must have patience because as a result of this patience, as I told you, you will reap Allah Himself as reward. For Allah mentions: **“... and fear Allah that you may be successful !”**

So if someone follows the commandments, the instructions of Allah, and in this month of Ramadan you are yourselves witnessing how many benefits are poured out, how many rewards have been reserved for those who have faith and who fast: it is Allah who gives them this reward. It's not man. When a person fasts, he does not do it to please people like him. And Allah said that the reward of the faster [who follows all the commandments that Allah has given and all the commandments that are attached with the fast] is that he receives Allah Himself as a reward. So it's Allah Who gives the reward [for fasting]. He raises whomever He wants, He rewards whomever He wants. We humans all make an effort, but no one has the power, the ability, or the right to say, *"See! In this month of Ramadan, I will have such and such rewards. I have already acquired Paradise."* It is Allah alone who knows who are the people whose Ramadan [month of fasting] has been accepted.

So nowadays we see how people judge the faith of their fellow human beings. They judge the faith of others. I do not know what legal paper [patent] they have acquired to judge the faith of others. The noble prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) had not himself obtained this permission to judge the faith of others. Allah simply told him to get his message across [to give it to all] clearly and it is Allah Who will give guidance. It is Allah Who gives people faith and it is He Who forgives; Allah raises the rank of whomsoever He wants, He forgives whomsoever He wants and He punishes whomsoever He wants.

As Allah says in the Holy Quran: **"Have you not seen those who claim themselves to be pure? [Those who present themselves as pure people] Rather, Allah purifies whom He wills, and injustice is not done to them, [even] as much as a thread [inside a date seed] [No injustice, not even the smallest injustice will be done to them]. »** (An-Nisa 4: 50)

This verse demonstrates, makes it clear that it is Allah Who makes pure whomever He wants. But there are proud, arrogant people who boast and who consider themselves more pious and purer than others. And they have the nerve and the daring to bring a judgement (*fatwa*) to say that their caliph had pity on a person who [supposedly] creates disorder (*fitna*). I ask this Mullah from Tamil Nadu who addressed my disciples and who circulated on the Whats App platform these words, to come forward to say what disorder is it? And he said I should have had the death penalty. See what he said. **"Death penalty"**! He himself is

ignorant of what really happened, and it is unclear what report he relied himself upon to say such things. He talks about the death penalty. But I say to this Mullah, that he then begins, he, his caliph and the Jamaat Ahmadiyya in general to build prisons in all the centres or mosques of Ahmadis; just like nowadays they place large billboards in the courtyard of mosques and place the photo of their leader - but then where did the creed of Islam "*Laa-Ilaaha-Ilallah*" go?

So, this is not the subject of my sermon today but I am making you understand, how a Mullah acted. He became the worst creature under the canopy of the heavens, prophecy which Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) had made and which is in the Mishkaat concerning the time which would come when there would be beautiful mosques, but there would not be worshipers who would have faith. The *Ulemas*, the Mullahs in the precincts of Islam [in Islam] would be deprived of fear of Allah (*Taqwa*) and they would be the worst creatures under the canopy of the heavens.

This is a demonstration of the extent of hatred that is manifested during the advent of the Servant of Allah. So start building prisons, and install hanging ropes. When a person says something, he recites verses from the Qur'an, he quotes the sayings of the noble prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh), he says that it is Allah Who gives him the revelation, or he may not be agree with the administration of Jamaat - what the Managing Committee [*Amila*] or any other person - is doing [even if the caliph [elected by man] is going against the Qur'an and the Hadiths] and he makes you understand everything that is not correct, so for these people, they say that this person is creating disorder [that he is a troublemaker]. So [according to them] death should have been ordered [by their caliph] for him.

So start installing prisons, hanging ropes in all Ahmadiyya centres or mosques. Whenever a person makes a "mistake" [from their conception of the word "mistake"] in the Jamaat, then they can give him [all those who make errors] the death penalty. When the others [non-Ahmadis] give them [i.e., the Ahmadis] the **death penalty**, then from what this Mullah is saying, it is to be believed then that they [the non-Ahmadi Muslims] were right to do it ?! [*May Allah preserve us from this notion*].

So I tell this Mullah to reflect on his words and especially that we are in the month of Ramadan. Think well and reflect, and let him come forward to describe the

disorder (*fitna*) that I have created. I challenge him to come forward and describe it to me. *Insha-Allah*.

Now I'll talk to you about **ZAKAT, FITRA** and **FIDYA**. I have received questions on the subject, and I am giving you its explanations in this Friday sermon.

According to Islamic law (*Shariah*), Zakat is compulsory alms (*Farz*) on all believing Muslims who can afford it, at least once a year. It is one of the five pillars of Islam. If someone refuses to accept its mandatory nature, they become unfaithful. (*Kafir*). And whoever does not account for the *Zakaat* correctly becomes a great sinner (*gunehgaar*).

*Zakaat* is so important that the first caliph of Islam, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (ra) in his reign time [as Caliph], declared unfaithful those who do not accept or do not comply with the *Zakaat* regulations [*Zakaat*-giving] and he even declared war on them.

Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) said, *"I have been commanded (by Allah) to fight people until they testify that there is no true god except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and perform Salat and pay Zakat. If they do so, they will have protection of their blood and property from me except when justified by Islam, and then account is left to Allah."* (Bukhari & Muslim)

Allah says in the Holy Quran about the *Zakaat*: **"Take of their riches a donation to purify them and to cleanse them thereby; and pray for them; surely your prayer is serenity (i.e., tranquillity) for them; and Allah is Ever-Hearing, Ever-Knowing."** (At-Tauba 9: 103)

*Zakaat* was established in Islam to fight and eradicate poverty. In the sense that, if the rich and the wealthy correctly gave part of their wealth and fortune annually to the poorest, the latter would see their standard of living raised; thus the wealth of the people would be balanced in the various sections of the population.

The principle is to offer each year a fortieth of one's fortune, that is to say, 2.5% annually. The Islamic regime does not foresee poverty in society thanks to the *Zakaat*.

Before concluding, I would like to say a few words about *Sadaqa-e-Fitr (Fitra)*. This alms-giving called *Sadaqa-e-Fitr* or commonly *Fitra* is a *Sadaqa* that Allah (swt) made mandatory. Its purpose is to cleanse our fasts. We must remember that it must be acquitted before the prayer of Eid-ul-Fitr. When we were fasting during Ramadan, paying *Fitra* is to make sure that Allah has accepted our fasts and purified this great *Ibadah* that we have done. It is compulsory for all parents to pay *Fitra* for their children who are still dependent on them, even for a baby who has just been born.

And then, whether for *Zakaat*, or for *Fitra* and even for *Fidya* too, the officers of the Jamaat [of each country] must collect all the money, forming a total [global] sum [after all the contributions have been made], and then the officials can channel that money to people who are in dire straits [in great difficulties] and who deserve that money. I know that the current situation is very difficult with the lockdown situation that we all live in. Each believer has his own pain, his own difficulties, but Allah has made these contributions compulsory [according to their means], and after the believers have made the sacrifices required as ordered by Allah, then Mosque or Jamaat officials must take the responsibility for ensuring that this money and goods are distributed [equitably] to the poor and those in great difficulty [and who need this money].

Regarding *Fidya*, the sick, the elderly, pregnant women, the breastfeeding mothers, or those who are travelling; in short, all those who cannot fast, as Allah (swt) makes us understand in the Holy Quran (Al-Baqara 2: 185), they must give or pay the *Fidya* in the form of the sum of money offered to the poor corresponding to that amount of food which they consume every day.

In closing we must strive as far as possible to stay away from the wrath of Allah and to do our duty to distance ourselves from sins and also prevent others from committing these sins.

May Allah accept our fasts, and all our sacrifices in His path and grant us all in the Jamaat Ul Sahih Al Islam, and all sincere Muslim believers around the world the immense blessings of the *Lailatul Qadr*. May Allah facilitate your ways towards Him, and may you receive His grace and Mercy in an exceptional way. *Ameen*.