

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Friday Khutbah – 18/06/2014

Preparation and Reception of Ramadan

Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) used to give the glad tidings of the arrival of the month of Ramadan to his companions by saying: “Ramadan has come upon you! A blessed month! Allah made the fasting of it an obligation. In it the gates of heaven are opened (a sign of the descent of mercy) and the gates of the Hell-fire are closed. The big *Shayateen* are chained up. In it there is a night which Allah has made better than a thousand nights. Whoever is deprived of good in it, he is really deprived!”

If a person wants to succeed in any task then he needs to be convinced of the worthiness of that task. He has to be psychologically and physical prepared to carry it out.

So, if one wants to succeed in Ramadan and to benefit from it, one has to convince himself that Ramadan is a valuable time and that missing the opportunity of it cannot be compensated. Indeed the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said: “May he be humiliated; the one who Ramadan comes upon him and passes without him being forgiven.”

One has to realise that the days and nights of Ramadan are numbered and that this Ramadan could be one’s last Ramadan. There are many people who had fasted last Ramadan but now they are among the dead!

One has to prepare psychologically for Ramadan by avoiding the activities that keep the mind busy and distract one from what one should concentrate upon during Ramadan. One can postpone such activities until after Ramadan. It is even more important that one must avoid amusements let alone prohibited things.

As part of the preparation for Ramadan one has to buy the house’s needs for the whole month before the beginning of Ramadan so as to avoid market places and the abominations that take place in them and thus protects one’s fasting from the things that could damage it and frees oneself for the worship of Allah for the whole of the month and not waste any part of it.

Part of the mental preparation for Ramadan is to know the virtues of fasting, that of *Qiyam*, recitation of the Qur’an and the last ten nights of Ramadan. Knowing these things encourages one to endeavour to get the best of Ramadan

Part of the preparation for Ramadan is to train oneself to go to the Masjid early for *Salat* and to stay in the *Masjid* before and after *Salat*. For people to benefit from their presence in the

Masjid, the *Masjid* atmosphere must be conducive for *Ibadah*. It must be quiet and free from distractions. Unfortunately this is something which is lacking in our *Masjid*. Immediately after the prayers people sit at the back of the Mosque and start talking to each other in loud voices. This happens almost after every prayer. In preparation for Ramadan and to have the right atmosphere in the *Masjid* this must stop immediately before the beginning of Ramadan.

Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'ala*) made an oath in *Surat al-Lail* (the night) by the time (night and day) during which actions of people take place, and by Himself (*Subhanahu wa ta'ala*) that the endeavours of people in this life are diverse. He says: "By the night when it covers (the sun.) By the day when it unveils itself. By Him Who created male and female. Certainly, your efforts and deeds are diverse.

If we consider the verse which is the subject of the oath (Certainly, your efforts and deeds are diverse) in light of the attitude of people towards the seasons of good including Ramadan; how they receive them and how they act during them, then this diversity in people's efforts becomes very clear.

Indeed people differ greatly in their efforts and deeds according to their Iman and certainty. Instead of making the maximum benefit of the seasons of good, some people waste them in amusement and play. This behaviour is driven by *Shaytan* who desires to turn people away from good. He makes these seasons of good for some seem appropriate times for play and rest. He does so, as he makes some *Bida'at* seasons for some other people appropriate times for *Ibadah*. So one has to be wary of the tricks of *Shaytan* and avoid them.

Fasting is an obligation upon every sane adult Muslim who is resident and physically able to fast. For a female Muslim there is an extra condition which is freedom from menstruation and after-birth bleeding.

Fasting is not an obligation upon the young who has not attained the age of puberty; however, if he/she can bear it, then he should be ordered to fast so that he/she can get used to it.

A young person reaches the age of puberty and becomes *Mukalaf* by one of three signs – whichever of them happens first-: completing fifteen years of age, the growth of the pubic hair and ejaculation of semen in wet dreams or otherwise. So, parents should be careful and make sure that their children fast when they reach the age of puberty.

Fasting is not an obligation upon a person who is permanently incapable to fast such as an old person or someone who is having a long-lasting disease. However, one has to feed a poor person for everyday of Ramadan.

As for a sick person who is likely to recover, if fasting is not difficult for him but does not harm him, it is *Wajib* for him to fast and he has no excuse not to fast. If fasting is difficult for him but does not harm him, he should break his fast and it is disliked for him to fast. If fasting harms him, then it is prohibited for him to fast.

When a sick person who broke his fast due to illness recovers, he must make up for the days he missed.

An academic examination is not an excuse for breaking the fast. If one's parents try to force one to break his fast because of the exams, one must not obey them because no one should be obeyed in something that results in disobeying Allah.

There is an erroneous analogical opinion that is spreading nowadays which says that people living in countries of high latitude in which the day hours become very long in summer, like Ireland, should estimate the length of the day and take it to be as the length of the day in Makkah then break their fast. They say this analogy is based on the *Hadith* of *Ad-Dajjal* in which the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said that he will remain on earth for forty days; one day like a year, one day like a month, one day like a week and the rest are like our days. When they asked him about the day which is like a year; would a prayer of one day suffice them? He said: No, make an estimation for times."

The analogy (*Qiyas*) here is incorrect since the marks of day and night are clearly distinct in Ireland. This would probably be correct in countries where the sun does not set and there is no night in twenty four hours.

Niyyah is a precondition for fasting according to the *Hadith* "There is no fasting for a person who does not make the intention from the night before."

Niyyah can be made at any time during the previous night even if it is done a moment before *Fajr*. Niyyah is an act of the heart. Uttering it is *Bid'ah*. Accordingly one must know about the fasting (beginning of Ramadan) by night time and make the intention. It is incorrect for one to say that I will get up in the morning and if I find people fasting I will fast with them otherwise I will not fast. This is unacceptable.

If it happens that a person goes to bed before ascertaining the beginning of the month of fasting and does not make a concrete Niyyah before *Fajr* and then wakes up in the morning and finds people fasting Ramadan – then he must abstain from the things which break the fast. However, he must make up for that day because he has not made the Niyyah before *Fajr*.

The fasting person does not need to renew the Niyyah every night. One Niyyah at the beginning of the month should be sufficient for the whole of it. If one interrupts one's fasting due to travel or sickness, then he has to renew his Niyyah.