

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ ،
وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا ،
مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ ،
وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ، يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ . وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَرْسَلَهُ بِدِينِ الْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ، بَيْنَ يَدَيْ السَّاعَةِ ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَا اللَّهِ وَأَحْذَرِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ مِنْ مَعْصِيَتِهِ
تاريخ اليوم

I council you and myself to have taqwa of Allah, and I council you and myself to avoid and beware of disobeying Him.

The date today is the 22nd of Sha'ban in the year 1430.

Allah t'ala says in Surat Al-Baqara:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

Whose meaning is:

You who have iman! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you – so that perhaps you will have taqwa.

And He (swt) says in a later ayat:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمُ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Whose meaning is:

The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance for mankind, with Clear Signs containing guidance and discrimination. Any of you who are resident for the month should fast it. But any of you who are ill or on a journey should fast a number of other days.

Allah desires ease for you; He does not desire difficulty for you. You should complete the number of days and proclaim Allah's greatness for the guidance He has given you so that hopefully you will be thankful.

It has also been reported from the great companion Salmaan Al-Farisi (r.a.h) that the Prophet (s.a.w.s) gave a speech on the last day of Sha'baan, and said, "O people! A great and blessed month has come to you – a month in which there is a night which is better than a thousand months; a month in which Allah has made it obligatory to fast and in which He has made standing in prayer during the night a voluntary action. Anyone who draws near to Allah during it by means of a voluntary good action is like someone who performs one of the obligatory actions outside it and performing an obligatory action during it is equivalent to performing seventy obligatory actions at any other time. It is the month of sabr and the reward for sabr is the Garden. It is the month of generous giving and the month in which a believer's provision is increased. He who gives someone fasting something with which to break their fast, that will bring him forgiveness for his wrong actions and remove him from the Fire, and he will have the same reward as the one he feeds without that diminishing their reward in any way."

Then the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Not all of us can find the extra food needed to feed another fasting person'. So the Prophet (s.a.w) responded, "Allah will give you the reward of feeding a fasting person even if you were to give him just a sip of milk, a date, or a sip of water. He who feeds a fasting person until he is full, Allah will make him drink out of my river, a sip of which will never allow him to be thirsty until he enters the Garden." Then he continued, "...This is the month the beginning of which is mercy, the middle part is forgiveness and the last part of it is freedom from hellfire."

Muslims, by the mercy of Allah we are approaching another blessed month of Ramadan. This great gift that Allah (swt), in His infinite generosity has reserved for us, the ummah of Sayidunnah Muhammad (s.a.w). The rest of mankind are going on with their normal lives completely oblivious to the secret of this blessed time. But through the words of Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w.s) we have a *taste* of the wonder contained in this month, and the opportunity it gives us to move closer to our Lord. And so here we are waiting, anxiously, for the time to come and the month to begin wa al-hamdulillah. Abu-Sa'id al-Khudri (rah) said, "Ramadan is the master of months, just as Jumuah is the master of days". And Abu Mas'ud (rah) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said, 'If the slaves of Allah knew

the true worth of the month of Ramadan they would wish that it lasted a whole year.' It is a month where good actions are multiplied and it is a time where the slave can draw closer to his Lord than at any other time. And as such it is a month where every Muslim should endeavour to increase in acts of worship and acts of generosity. Alhamdulillah for this tremendous blessing. And may Allah (swt) fill the month with light and barakah for all who sincerely worship Him during it.

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s) said: "Anyone who fasts Ramadan with belief and with awareness of the reward for doing it is forgiven all his previous wrong actions."

And Allah t'ala says in Surah an-Nazi'at:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ
فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

Whose meaning is:

But as for him who feared the Station of his Lord and forbade the lower self its appetites, the Garden will be his refuge.

There are two aspects to Ramadan. The first is the activity of fasting and the second is the nature of the time itself. There is no spiritual tradition, which does not practice fasting in one form or another. Fasting is, in fact, a defining human practice. Any healthy hungry creature other than a human being will, if offered food it likes, automatically consume it. Only a human being is able, by an act of will, to abstain from eating in those circumstances. This makes it a very special act of worship, which is very highly rewarded by Allah (swt) when it is done for His sake. As we learn from the hadith of the Rasul (s.a.w.s) "Every good action of the son of Adam is multiplied by ten to seven hundred times. Allah says: 'Except fasting. It is mine and I repay it Myself. The faster abandons his food and drink for My sake.' The faster has two delights: delight when he breaks his fast and delight when he meets his Lord."

There are many benefits to be gained from the fast, however perhaps the greatest benefit lies in the fact that by not eating and drinking when we want to, we break one of the fundamental and basic links, which imprison us in this lower world. The effect of breaking this link is to open up to us access to direct knowledge of our own selves and beyond that to the presence of our All-Providing Lord.

As we have said, Ramadan is a unique time in the year when we can draw closer to Allah through sincere good actions. But it is a test. And as we have learnt from the hadith of our Beloved Messenger (s.a.w) fasting has a limitless reward, which Allah t'ala repays Himself.

Now one can often hear hadith like this one without reflecting on its true meaning. Sometimes they can almost become like proverbs or old sayings. But these words are true. You must reflect on them and appreciate the true worth of this great blessing from Allah (swt). Your fast belongs to Him and He ('azza wa jalla) will repay you in full as much as He wishes.

So do not waste this tremendous opportunity, this great opening from Allah (swt). Hold on to sabr. Overcome the difficulties; the hunger, the thirst, the tiredness and increase in good actions during this month in the hope and knowledge that Allah (swt) will reward us for them, both in this life and the next.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى مَنْ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ،
أَوْصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَا اللَّهِ وَطَاعَتِهِ، وَأُحْذِرْكُمْ عَنْ مَعْصِيَتِهِ وَمُخَالَفَتِهِ. فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِيمَا أَمَرَ، وَأَنْتَهُوا
عَمَّا نَهَى عَنْهُ وَزَجَرَ.

قال تعالى:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ {7} وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ {8}

أَمَا بَعْدُ:

Allah says in Surat al-Hashr:

وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

Whose meaning is:

and prefer them to themselves even if they themselves are needy. It is the people who are safe-guarded from the avarice of their own selves who are

successful.

When the Prophet (s.a.w) was asked which was the best type of charity, he replied, "The charity of Ramadan".

Ramadan is the month of sabr, it is the month of the Qur'an and it is also the month of generosity.

Ibn 'Abbas (r.a.h) said, "The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), was the most generous of people, and he was even more generous during Ramadan when Jibril (a.h.s) met him. Jibril used to meet him every night in Ramadan until it was over and the Prophet would go through the Qur'an with him. The Messenger of Allah was more generous with good things than the blowing wind."

Let us look briefly at the example of Sayidunnah Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (r.a.h) in order to better understand this matter of generosity inshallah.

It has been said that Sayidunnah Abu Bakr was the most generous of all the companions. In Surat Al-Layl, Allah t'ala says:

الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى {18} وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى {19} إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ
الْأَعْلَى {20} وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى

Whose meaning is:

Those who give their wealth to purify themselves – Not to repay someone else for a favour done – Desiring only the Face of their Lord Most High. They will certainly be satisfied.

It is unanimously agreed that these ayats were revealed about Sayidunnah Abu Bakr (r.a.h). Ibn Umar (r.a.h) said, "Abu Bakr accepted Islam on the day that he did, and in his house there were forty thousand dirhams. Then he emigrated to Madinah and he had nothing but five thousand dirhams. He had spent all of that on freeing slaves and helping the cause of Islam".

Umar ibn al-Khattab (r.a.h) said, "The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) ordered us to give sadaqah and that agreed with the property that I had so I said, 'Today I will outdo Abu Bakr if I am ever to out do him', and I brought half of my wealth. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said, 'What have you left for your family?' I said, 'I have left the like of it.' Then Abu Bakr came with everything

that he had, and he (s.a.w) said 'Abu Bakr, what have you left for your family?' He said I have left for them Allah and His Messenger.' I said, 'I will never outdo him in anything'.

I remind you again, do not listen to these tremendous stories and take them as fairy tales or fantasies. They are true. Men such as Sayidunnah Abu Bakr and Sayidunnah Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) are our forefathers in Islam, we are the inheritors of what they left and so we must strive to follow their examples to the best of our abilities. Ramadan is a month where the shayatin are locked up and so it is a time when good actions are easier to perform. One of the highest of these is generosity to our fellow Muslims and so we must strive everyday to increase in acts of generosity. Whether it is giving from your wealth, or feeding another Muslim, or giving of your time or even just a kind word, do not let a day pass, especially during this tremendous month, without pushing yourself to be generous in as much as you are able.

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said, "O son of Adam! It is better for you to spend what is in excess of your needs and worse for you to keep it. You will not be blamed for (keeping) enough to cover your needs. Begin with your immediate dependants. The upper hand is better than the lower hand."

And so we can see that the key to this matter of generosity is sadaqah and the key to sadaqah is not merely to give, but to give from what one loves most.

Allah t'ala says in Surat Al-Imran:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

Whose meaning is:

You will not attain true goodness until you give of what you love, Whatever you give away, Allah knows it.

And He (swt) says in Sura Baqara:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ

You who have iman! Give away

Some of the good things you have earned And some of what the earth produces for you. Do not have recourse to bad things when you give, Things

that you would only take with your eyes tight shut!

Often the thing that stops you being generous is that inner fear that by giving away what you have, you won't have enough for yourself or your family. It is this fear and anxiety that causes people to hoard up their wealth hoping that it will make them rich and in turn make them happy and satisfied. But in fact this is far from true and in reality the exact opposite is the case.

Allah t'ala says:

وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تظَلْمُونَ

Whose meaning is:

Whatever good you give away is to your own benefit when you give desiring only the Face of Allah. Whatever good you give away will be repaid to you in full. You will not be wronged.

Abu Hurayra (r.a.h) reported that the Prophet (s.a.w) said, "There is no day which dawns on the slaves Of Allah without two angels descending and one of them saying, 'O Allah, refund those who give money' and the other saying, 'O Allah, ruin those who withhold it.'" And he (s.a.w) also said, "Sadaqa does not decrease wealth in any way."

The fact is that we all know this to be true and in fact, it is a natural instinct to place the needs of others before our own. However, in that moment of giving our inner self can come between us and another person and cause us to place our needs above theirs. This inner self or *nafs* is driven by low desires and the fear over provision. Giving in to it is a sign of a lack of knowledge, because the truth is that your provision has been decreed and is coming to you.

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Shaytan promises you poverty and commands you to avarice. Allah promises you forgiveness from Him and abundance. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

Allah t'ala has provided each of us with everything that we need. We must reflect on this point until we understand it properly, and until we believe it to

the point that it manifests itself in our words *and* actions. You must trust in Allah with a knowledge of certainty that He (swt) will take care of your affairs and never leave you wanting. This is the knowledge that guided Sayidunnah Abu Bakr (r.a.h) in his generosity and it is this knowledge that will set us free from the trap of this capitalist society and allow us to fulfil the potential that Allah t'ala has placed within each of us.

Allah t'ala says in Sura Saba':

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

Say: My Lord expands the provision Of any slave he wills Or restricts it. But anything you expend will be replaced by Him. He is the Best of Providers.

And the Rasul (s.a.w) said, "Ramadan is the month of sharing and the month in which the provision of the mu'min is increased."

And so we must take every opportunity during this blessed month to be generous to each other, secure in the knowledge that rather than decreasing our wealth, by giving from what we have, we are in fact increasing our wealth, both in this life and the Akhira.

'A'isha, the mother of the believers, reported that they sacrificed a sheep and the Prophet (s.a.w) said, "How much of it is left?" She said, "All that remains of it is its shoulder." He (s.a.w) said, "On the contrary, all of it remains except its shoulder."

There is no doubt that Ramadan is a special time; every Muslim knows this. It is somehow qualitatively different from every other time. Allah ta'ala has made it the setting of a great secret – that night which is better than a thousand months. It is this moment which permeates the whole month so that in it, the Gates of the Garden are open and its scent reaches us in this world. And the shayatin which usually crowd in on us, making it difficult for us to remember Allah and act rightly, are chained up, giving our hearts ease and freedom. This is why good action is so highly rewarded during Ramadan, as the hadith tells us. However, as with all good news there is an element of warning and that is that this time is extremely precious and we cannot afford to waste a moment of it. In the first few days of the month, the whole extent of Ramadan seems to stretch out abundantly in front of us; and it is easy to think there is plenty of time to begin extra acts of ibadah or study of the Qur'an. But how often do we then reach the end of the month wishing

we had taken more advantage of the time!

So let us this year be people who take full advantage of this priceless blessing from Allah. Let us increase in our 'ibada; let us be generous in our giving; let us curb our tongues and open our hearts; let us be ready and waiting when the Laylatu'l-Qadr arrives so that we can receive the gifts it offers; let us reap every benefit from this Ramadan, allowing ourselves to be changed by it in a way that will enable us to go out from it renewed and able to take on the task of re-establishing Allah's deen and implementing the sunna of His Messenger (s.a.w).

كَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا
وَارْضَ اللَّهُمَّ عَنِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ وَعَثْمَانَ وَعَلِيٍّ ، وَسَائِرِ الصَّحَابَةِ خُصُوصًا
الْمُهَاجِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ وَالْأَنْصَارِوالتَّابِعِينَ لَهُمْ وَتَابِعِي التَّابِعِينَ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِ وُلَاةَ أُمُورِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ لِمَا يُرْضِيكَ وَلَا تَبَاعِ سُنَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ
اللَّهُمَّ أَعِزَّ الْإِسْلَامَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ ، وَاخْذُلِ الْكُفْرَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ ، وَانصُرِ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ،
وَاجْعَلْ كَلِمَتَكَ هِيَ الْعُلْنَا ، وَكَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ هِيَ السُّفْلَى
رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ
رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ
رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا
رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ
رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا
إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ
يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ
وَقُومُوا إِلَى صَلَاتِكُمْ يَرْحَمُكُمُ ال