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Ramadan



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Maintaining the Spiritual High

Ramadan may come and go like a gentle breeze that passes us by, give us comfort while it is with us, but leaves no lasting imprint in our memory, nor an impression in our life. We take it in our strides every year. When it comes, we fast, we perform *tarawīh*, we fill the *masjids* during the five prayers, we donate our money generously, we recite the Qur'an and some of us – albeit mainly the elderly – spend the last ten days in *I'tikāf*.

Despite all of this, we all suffer from an almighty anticlimax the moment Ramadan is over. Eid day seems like a huge sigh of relief that Ramadan is over and we can go back to our old ways. Our Eid day could be seen as 'good riddance' celebration when we analyse the manner in which so many of us spend our Eid day and allow our families to spend Eid day.

This may sound very harsh but let's face it: on Eid day we violate every command of Allah (SWT) with impunity. What we do on Eid day is in stark contrast to what we aspire to all Ramadan.

The Nights of Eid

The night of Eid is a night of forgiveness. Imam al-Nawawi said in his commentary of Sahih Muslim that the scholars are unanimous that it is recommended to spend the nights of the two Eid days in worship. There is also a weak *hadīth* to this effect in Sunan Ibn Majah that the Prophet (SAW) said, 'whoever stands in worship on the nights of the two Eids expecting reward from Allah, his heart will not die on the day that hearts will die (i.e. the day of judgement).' The practice of early Muslims is consistent with this as narrated by Imam al-Shafī'i that the best of the men of

Madinah would go to the masjid on the night of Eid to pray to Allah and remember Him (al-Bayhaqi). This is in stark contrast to how we spend the night of Eid. Preparing food, getting our clothes ready for what one can only describe as a mass fashion show. Young people choosing their music to blast around on Eid day, and even blazing around in their hired cars which they have just picked up the day before Eid.

On the morning of Eid, as we leave our homes for the Eid prayer, Allah ﷻ will forgive many. What forgiveness can we expect if we have spent the night before in this way, only hours after completing our last fast of Ramadan?

Eid Day

Then comes the morning after the night before, Eid day. Yes, we are happy and in a celebratory mood. So we start the day tasting the great food, often cooked and prepared over the whole of the previous week. The sweets, samosas, pilau and biryani. We put on our best clothes and go out for prayer. Prayer? Our attitude from the night before and our preparations may well make it seem as though prayer doesn't quite fit in to the programme of the day. Think about it, if the rest of our day is consistent with its inception with prayer, then we are doing something right. But if prayer seems like an accidental blip because everything else in the day is in complete contrast to the very notion of worship, then we need ask ourselves if we even remember which month we were in yesterday.

What exactly are we celebrating on Eid day? Eid day is a celebration of the end of Ramadan, a month in which we can be hopeful of achieving Allah's ﷻ forgiveness. Thus we come out on Eid day expressing our gratitude and celebrating our forgiveness. While eating, spending time with our families and all permissible forms of celebration are expected on this day, there is no licence to commit sin and disobey Allah ﷻ. Sometimes it appears to me as though, after a month of fasting,

worship, and good deeds, it is as though we see Eid day as a break from it all. This is indeed not the case.

What really concerns me is that our actions on Eid may be a reflection of the true nature of our Ramadan. That if immediately after Ramadan we cannot refrain from disobeying Allah ﷻ, it must mean that our Ramadan was in vain. The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘there is many a fasting person who gets nothing out of his fast except hunger; and many a night-worshipper who gets nothing out of spending the night up except sleeplessness.’ (al-Nasā’i)

Keeping the spirit alive

When it comes to keeping the Ramadan spirit alive, we have to ask ourselves what we want out of Ramadan. If we do not want piety to come out of it, if we do not want a change in our lives then we will not get that. If a person’s intention from the outset is that he/she will make some changes for Ramadan and perform some worship, stock up on rewards, and then just go back to how they were after, then what hope can such a person have of keeping the Ramadan spirit alive? This person never had the intention in the first place.

So, if you are reading this article on Eid day or just after, ask yourself this question: did I want Ramadan to change me? Do I welcome a positive change that makes me punctual in my salah, that makes me recite the Qur’an regularly, that makes me wear hijab, makes me more reflective, makes me give up certain sins that I otherwise enjoy? If it is welcome, then you will find it easier to keep the spirit alive, if not, then the spirit will die on Eid day like it does for many thousands of us. If that intention is absent, then we have to make the intention now.

Then comes the question of what we should do to keep the spirit alive. That really is not a difficult question at all. Firstly we must remember that Ramadan is a time when we increase our

worship in the hope of increased reward from Allah ﷻ. It is not the only month when we worship. Thus, Ramadan should not be the only time we pick up the Qur'an to recite, it should not be the only time we go to the masjid for salah, engage in *dhikr*, nor should it be the only time that we fast. These and all other acts of worship are part of the daily life of every Muslim.

Thus, we should all commit to performing our salah in congregation at the masjid just as we did in Ramadan. If the Ramadan is the only time we pray, then start to pray every day. Recitation of the Qur'an should keep us alive all year round. Even if it means that we recite the Qur'an for 15 minutes every day. Many of us would have enjoyed the beautiful recitation of various Imams in taraweeh, would it not be nice to be able to recite nicely ourselves? This might be a good time to enrol on a course that teaches us to recite the Qur'an well. Indeed many people do not recite the Qur'an because they are not confident that they can recite it well, or they simply do not enjoy their own recitation. If that is the case, then one should learn to recite with *tajwīd* and also continue to listen to the Qur'an from CDs and mp3 players.

Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) is the nutrition of a believer; it is what gives us spiritual energy and strength. Recitation of the Qur'an is the greatest form of remembrance. But other forms of *dhikr* mentioned in *hadīth* should be part of our daily routine too. Saying *subhanallah*, *al-hamdulillah*, *Allahu Akbar*, *la'ilaha illallah* repeatedly will not only earn us immense reward, but also keep our hearts pure and keep us energised.

Most importantly, we would have realised that for most us Ramadan was a month in which we committed less sin. Continuing this is a priority. Many of us would have felt that not swearing, not backbiting, not gossiping, not listening to music, giving up immoralities that we otherwise trivialise was actually quite enjoyable and uplifting. Well this is the time to make the decision to give those things up permanently. Our intention is of paramount importance. If we do not want to give up sins, Allah (SWT) will not give us the *tawfīq*. Making the intention to give up is evidence

that we love Allah (SWT), that we love our Prophet ﷺ and we love our *dīn*, and that while our weaknesses and the Shaytan make us sin, we hate it though we engage in it. This is a positive.

Last but not least, let us continue our duas because nothing happens without Allah's help which we must continue to seek always.

May Allah grant us Ramadan over and over again. Ameen.

Shaykh Shams ad-Duha Muhammed



A Struggle With Sincerity

This piece of writing, as the reader will notice, is a personal reflection from my journal. Since becoming a hafiz of the Qur'an and as a consequence of having the opportunity to lead the night prayers, my experience of Ramadan has been somewhat wild. I go through a lot of struggle and strife during the month. As a result, I've made it a habit to take note of all the problems that I face and set solutions to overcome them. In this piece, I discuss my struggle with sincerity during Ramadan. I hope it will be beneficial for readers *bi ithnillahi ta'ala*.

Ramadan is no doubt the month of Qur'an, so it's not surprising that we absorb ourselves in the recitation and pondering of it more so in this month than in any other months. For the *huffāz* the month is like preparing for an intense exam; the pressure of leading Taraweeh forces them to exhaustively look over and repeat their portion of the recital so that they do not have any slip ups whilst leading. I face many challenges in the month of Ramadan such as juggling study and work with preparation for the night. Often these challenges make me sway from the true purpose behind the struggles I face during Ramadan.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for me is dealing with the violent hay-fever season. If I don't take my tablets at *suhūr* time, my day becomes an endless sneezing spree and my eyes and face remain constantly itchy. If I do take the tablets, *Ya Laita Sha'ri* [Oh my sorrow]! I'm left to deal with my adversary - the blocked nose. My *mīm* becomes a baa and my noon becomes a *dāl*, and anytime I attempt to do the *ghunna* - ARGHH! An hour before Taraweeh I should be mentally preparing myself. But what is it that I am doing? Anything and everything to unblock this nose of mine. I'm using all kinds of means: nose drops, shoving Vicks into my nose, jogging on the spot. All this extra work so that I'm able to recite clearly and so that the *musallis* have a pleasant experience. Reciting the Quran in a beautiful tone is something that is desired as the *hadīth* of the

Messenger (saw) states:

“Beautify the Qur’an with your voice.”

Beautifying the Qur’an should help one to ponder over the Qur’an and increase in their taqwa. But outside factors which I don’t really have control over do interfere with this.

Whilst leading, I try my very best to have *khushū’* and *khudū* and be fully immersed in the Qur’an and the prayer itself. But for some reason doubts over whether I’m reciting my portion correctly creep in - am I on track or have I drifted to somewhere completely different? Sometimes I’m doing a grammatical analysis of a word in my head whilst leading - should the word be *marfū’* or should it be *mansūb*? Wait!! The *fi’l* is *majhūl* so that means the word is *nā’ib al-fā’il* and therefore it will be *marfū’*. Sometimes I make the wrong grammatical judgement and then really do slip. And then comes the *luqma* (correcting the Imam if he makes a mistake in the recital). The *luqma* is a double edged sword for the *ḥuffāz* that are leading; it can either get them back on track or completely throw them off course.

Problems such as those mentioned above often make me question my sincerity. Why am I unblocking my nose just an hour before Taraweeh? Am I doing it so the people enjoy the recitation or am I doing it for Allah’s pleasure? Why am I so tense and worried whilst leading? I should be focusing on the words of Allah but instead I’m constantly thinking about the possibility of erring in my recitation.

A solution for sincerity

Ask yourself why you are doing what you are doing.

Why are you leading Taraweeh? Why are you trying to beautify the Qur’an whilst leading?

Hopefully you’re doing this for Allah’s sake. You’re leading and reciting the *kalām* of Allah to gain His pleasure.

You might feel like your sincerity is being interrupted by the wants and needs of the *musallis* and other factors. Does this mean your sincerity is lacking?

These are whispers or internal dialogues that are taking place in your mind. And these internal dialogues questioning your sincerity will always happen. The minute these dialogues come to you, you should quickly get yourself out of that mental conversation and not entertain it any further. Because allowing these dialogues to preoccupy you will only affect your performance whilst leading. So just tell yourself loudly and clearly with conviction, “I am doing this and will do this for the sake of Allah,” and then pray for steadfastness.

It’s understandable that you are conscious of the people behind you and you want to give them a pleasant experience. Don’t let this occupy your heart to an extent that throughout the prayer you are only thinking, “How are the *musallis*?” Rather, think about how all of these people have come to hear the word of Allah ﷻ. And you have been honoured with leading them and allowing them to hear the words of Allah. So the *khushū’* and *khudū* they experience whilst listening to the Qur’an and also the pondering they are engaging in, you will *in’sha’Allah* share in the reward. Remember, you’re not only reciting the Qur’an but you’re also listening to the words of Allah just like the people behind you. So let the words of Allah penetrate into your heart and enjoy reciting and listening to it.

At the same time be considerate of the people behind you. Be considerate with regards to the timing. This in no way affects your sincerity as the Prophet ﷺ was considerate of those praying behind him. Nevertheless, you will have someone at the end of the day who will advise you to read faster. Some will advise you to read slower. Some will tell you to spend less time in *sujūd* and others will tell you to spend more time. You can’t please everyone. There’s only so much you can do. The main thing is to please Allah. And if you feel that you have slipped here and there with regards to being sincere, then do *istighfār* and perhaps offer some voluntary prayers alone to make

up for it.

The above mentioned points have been taken from my teachers and peers - May Allah reward all of them. May Allah keep us steadfast during this blessed month and allow us to gain his pleasure, mercy and forgiveness. Ameen.

A Scribe



الكتاب المبين

قالوا : حدثنا عن كتاب ربنا . قلت : هو الكتاب الذي أنزله الله تعالى على نبينا محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم ، ولم يجعل له عوجا ، يخرج الناس من الظلمات إلى النور ، كتاباً متشابهاً مثاني تقشعر منه جلود الذين يخشون ربهم ثم تلين جلودهم وقلوبهم إلى ذكر الله ، ذلك هدى الله يهدي به من يشاء ، ومن يضلل الله فما له من هاد . قلت : فعن أي شأن من شؤونه تستنبؤون؟ قالوا : لقد كثرت كتب التفسير كثرة هائلة رابية على العد والإحصاء ، فلا ندري على ما نعتمد منها ، وإلى ما نرجع ، وبم نثق ونستند ، مضطربين اضطرابا شديدا ، وقلقين قلقا عظيما ، غير راكنين إلى أمر ولا ثابتين عليه ثباتا .

قلت : هل أنزل ربنا كتابه إلى خلقه ليفسروه؟ وهل كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقرأه على الناس فيفسره لهم تفسيركم هذا؟ لقد أسأتم بربكم الظن إن خيل لكم ذلك أو توهمتم منه شيئا؟ إنه كتاب غني منزل من عند ربنا الغني عن العالمين ، وانظروا إلى كثير من كتب التفسير فقد امتلأت بالإسرائيليات والقصاص الخرافية والآراء الفلسفية والكلامية والتأويلات الغريبة والمحامل البعيدة ، فمثلا ذكر الإمام فخر الدين الرازي في تفسير الفتح من سورة النصر أنه فتح مكة ، أو فتح خيبر ، أو فتح الطائف ، أو الفتح مطلقا ، أو فتح العلوم ، ولا يخفى على من له أدنى مناسبة لكتاب الله تعالى أن الفتح لم يرد فيه إلا بمعنى فتح مكة .

قالوا : ما دليلك على كون القرآن الكريم غنيا عن التفسير؟ قلت : قوله تعالى : " تلك آيات القرآن وكتاب مبين " ، وقوله " ألم ، تلك آيات الكتاب المبين " (يوسف 1) ، وقوله " قد جاءكم من الله نور وكتاب مبين " (المائدة 15) ، وقوله " ولقد أنزلنا إليكم آيات بينات " (النور 34) ، وقوله : " بلسان عربي مبين " ، أي إنه

كتاب ناصع معناه جلي مرماء ساطع تبيانه وقاطع برهانه ، قرآن عربي غير ذي عوج ، أعجز الفصحاء البلغاء من العرب العرباء عن الإتيان بمثل أقصر سورة من سوره في تحد صارخ ما زال ولا يزال قائما .

قالوا : اشرح لنا كونه مبينا ، قلت : الفلاسفة والعلماء إذا نطقوا بكلمة أو كتبوا جملة كانت مجرد

دعوى حتى يصحبها دليل أو برهان أو شهادة ، وقد يحتاج ادلتهم إلى أدلة ، وبراهينهم إلى براهين ،

وشهاداتهم إلى شهادات . والأمر لا ينتهي إلى حد ، ولكن كتاب الله مبين في نفسه ، فإنه إفصاح عن

الفطرة التي خلق الناس عليها وربط بينها وبين آيات الله في الخلق مع انسجام بينها وتوافق ، مؤيدة لها

الحواس والعقول والألباب في تناغم وتناسق ، وكذلك اللسان الذي اختاره لكتابه لسان عربي مبين دخل

قلوب العرب الأولين من دون إذن ولا طلب منهم ، ولم يتهموا القرآن بتعقيد في اللفظ أو المعنى ، ولم

يتنافروا منه للكثرة فيه أو عجمة ، فبيان معنى القرآن وبيان لسانه لا يشاركه فيهما كتاب ولا كلام . ولن

يهتدي إلى ذلك إلا من تديره واتقى الله ، اللهم لك الحمد على ما أنزلته إلينا هدى وبيانا ونورا وشفاء .

قالوا : أو لم يقل الله تعالى للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في سورة النحل 44 : " وأنزلنا إليك الذكر

لتبين للناس ما نزل إليهم ولعلهم يتفكرون"؟ قلت : بلى ، قالوا : فما معناه؟ قلت : بيان النبي صلى الله

عليه وسلم لكتاب الله تعالى له ثلاثة معان ، قالوا : ما هي؟ قلت :

الأول هو بيانه للقرآن الكريم بعضه ببعض ، وهو قوله تعالى " ثم إن علينا بيانه " ، وقد يردف الله

الآيات البيانية بقوله " كذلك بين الله آياته للناس " وما أشبهه ، وما أكثر ما كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم

يبين بعضه ببعض ، فإن القرآن يجمل مرة ويفصل أخرى ، فمثلا قال : " فسبح بحمد ربك بالعشي

والإبكار " ، وقال : " فسبح بحمد ربك قبل طلوع الشمس وقبل الغروب ومن الليل فسبحه وإدبار السجود " ،

وقال : " فسبح بحمد ربك حين تقوم ومن الليل فسبحه وإدبار النجوم " ، وقال : " فسبحان الله حين تمسون

وحين تصبحون ، وله الحمد في السماوات والأرض وعشيا وحين تظهرون " وقال : " فاصبر على ما يقولون

وسبح بحمد ربك قبل طلوع الشمس وقبل غروبها ، ومن آناء الليل فسبح وأطراف النهار لعلك ترضى " ،

وقال : " وأقم الصلاة طرفي النهار وزلفا من الليل إن الحسنات يذهبن السيئات " ، وقال : " أقم الصلاة للدوك

الشمس إلى غسق الليل وقرآن الفجر إن قرآن الفجر كان مشهودا ومن الليل فتعجد به نافلة لك عسى أن يبعثك ربك مقاما محمودا" .

الثاني هو تطبيقه لأحكامه ، فوضوؤه وصلاته وصيامه وزكاته وحجه وسائر سننه بيان للقرآن الكريم ، وهو تأويله ، أخرج البخاري عن عائشة رضي الله عنها أنها قالت كان النبي صليوسلم يكثُر أن يقول في ركوعه وسجوده سبحانك اللهم ربنا وبحمدك اللهم اغفر لي ، يتأول القرآن ، أي إن تسبيحه هذا تأويل قوله تعالى "فسبح بحمد ربك واستغفره" ، وقال ابن عيينة : السنة تأويل الأمر والنهي ، وهذا هو مراد الشافعي وغيره إذ قالوا : إن السنة بيان للقرآن الكريم .

والثالث استنباطه من كتاب الله تعالى ، فكم من سننه هي فهمه لكتاب الله تعالى ، واستنباطه منها ، فقوله "خير القرون قرني ثم الذين يلونهم" مستنبط من قوله تعالى "والسابقون الأولون من المهاجرين والأنصار والذين اتبعوهم بإحسان رضي الله عنهم ورضوا عنه" ، وكفارة مفطر صيام رمضان استنبطها من كفارة الظهر ، لأن الظهر تحريم ما أحل الله تعالى ، وتعمد الإفطار في نهار رمضان تحليل لما حرم الله تعالى ، والتحليل والتحريم كلاهما مختص بالله تعالى ، فسوى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بينهما في الكفارة ، ولا شك أن التسوية بين المتماثلين من أفضل الرأي والاجتهاد ، وهو معنى قوله تعالى في سورة النساء الآية 105 : "إنا أنزلنا إليك الكتاب بالحق لتحكم بين الناس بما أراك الله" .

قالوا : أو لم يناقض قولك في شرح بيان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قولك الأول الذي أكدت فيه أن القرآن كتاب مبين بلسان عربي مبين لا يحتاج إلى تفسير الناس؟ قلت : لا تناقض بين الأمرين : فإن كل كلام بين يعضد بعضه بعضا ، والناس ما زالوا يحملون كلام العقلاء بعضه على بعض ، موفقين بينه ، ومباعدين عنه الاختلاف والتجافي ، فكذلك القرآن الكريم .

وكل تعليم يعتمد على تطبيق ، وكذلك القرآن ، فالكلام مهما كان بينا ، يحتاج إلى تأويل ،

والتطبيق والتأويل أمران خارجان عن الكلام ، فإنك إذا ألفت قواعد السياقة بأبين لغة لن تتكفل بتعليم الناس السياقة ، بل إنهم يحتاجون معه إلى دروس تطبيقية ، ولا أرى الأمر يخفى على أحد .

وكل كلام بين ينطقه العقلاء يتضمن معاني كثيرة جلية وخفية ، وجميلة ودقيقة ، ومدلولات شتى

من عبارة وإشارة واقتضاء ، تنكشف للمتدبر فيها ، وهذا لا ينافي البيان ، والقرآن الكريم بحر للمعاني لا

ساحل له ، وحاوٍ لحقائق ظاهرة وباطنة لا نهاية لها .

قالوا : قد استوعبنا ما ألقىت إلينا من التنقيب عن بيان كتاب الله عز وجل شاكرين لك وداعين

لك بمزيد من العلم والفقه ، فما توصينا به؟ قلت : أوصيكم بتلاوة آيات الله تعالى ناظرين فيها ومتدبرين

إياها تدبرا ، قال تعالى : كتاب أنزلنا إليك مبارك ليدبروا آياته وليتذكر أولو الألباب" ، وقال : أفلا يتدبرون

القرآن أم على قلوب أفعالها" ، وقال : "أفلا يتدبرون القرآن ولو كان من عند غير الله لوجدوا فيه اختلافا

كثيرا" ، واعلموا أن التدبر مع التقوى هو الكفيل بالمنع عن التفسير بالرأي ، ولم تتطرق التفسيرات الزائغة

والتأويلات الفاسدة إلى المسلمين إلا من أجل الإعراض عن كتاب الله تعالى أو قلة التدبر فيه .

شيخ محمد أكرم الندوي

