



15TH SHA'BAN & Preparing for Ramadhan

From the Bayan of Ustadh Jee db

Allah Taalah through his mercy allowed us once more to witness the month of Sha'ban. The month of Ramadhan is drawing closer with every day. Some people spend this time preparing for the month of Ramadhan. Others don't care at all and others only prepare through apparent means. For Allah Taalah to gather us today upon this worry is only through His mercy. The month of Sha'ban is known as شعبان. Our Hazrat has mentioned that ش is for "sharafat" which shows that Sha'ban is a month of nobility. The letter ع refers to عل المرتبة showing that the rank of this month is very high in the sight of Allah. The reason being that this month is connected to the month of Ramadhan. When something is connected to a noble thing, it increases its own worth. It is mentioned that a Jew once said to Umar رضي الله عنه that if the Ayah لكم دينكم was revealed on us, we would have taken that day as a day of celebration. Umar رضي الله عنه said that we know this day, the time and place when the Ayah was revealed. Ulemma mention that Umar رضي الله عنه want to say that the day of Arafah is already Eid for us because it is connected to the day of Eid. In the same way, the value of this month has increased because of it being connected to the month of Ramadhan.

The letter ب is for بر because this is a month of piety. A person ought to prepare and train himself during this month, before the month of Ramadhan sets in. If a player is told that he has to play against another team, he will have to train by playing with his own team. If he does not train with his own team, he will not be allowed to play with the opposing team because preparation is necessary for the actual event. Similarly, the month of Sha'ban is a month of preparation for the month of Ramadhan. This is why it is mentioned that Nabi ﷺ would fast excessively in this month. Aisha رضي الله عنها says Nabi ﷺ would fast so much that she thought He would never stop.

The letter ل stands for لفة because a special mercy of Allah ﷻ descends upon His servants in this month. Allah ﷻ blesses his servants with a special night during this month. If he makes use of this night, his sins will be forgiven even before the onset of Ramadhan.

The letter ن is for نور referring to the anwaar that descend during this month. The blessings and anwaar begin descending after the 15th and keep increasing until the onset of Ramadhan. He presents the similitude of the time predawn, when the brightness keeps increasing until the sun finally rises and illuminates the world. Similarly, we can feel the blessings and light of Ramadhan in the ending days of Sha'han

Nabi ﷺ taught an amazing Duaa to the Sahaba رضي الله عنهم when Ramadhan would begin drawing close:

اللهم سلمني لرمضان وسلمه لي وتسلمه مني متقبلا

Oh Allah, keep me safe for Ramadhan and let the month of Ramadhan be a safety for me and accept this month from me.

اللهم سلمني لرمضان:

Nabi ﷺ is teaching us from this Duaa that physical preparation is also necessary for the month of Ramadhan. This entails increasing your daily Ibaadat, increasing the duration of your Salaah, increasing recitation of the Quran etc. One can only be able to worship Allah in Ramadhan if he is physically capable. We are therefore being taught to make Duaa and physically prepare ourselves too.

Secondly, by reciting this Duaa often, we are also mentally preparing ourselves for the great month. This is the principle of the Dunya, for example if a person passes away and an elderly person needs to be informed, the people of the house try to prepare him mentally beforehand. Similarly, if a child has to be sent to school, parents will prepare the child mentally beforehand. This shows that mental preparation is also very imperative and this is why Nabi ﷺ taught us this Duaa. By reciting it as often as possible, we will be mentally prepared for Ramadhan.

Thirdly, the Duaa will also definitely have an effect on our spirituality. This is the purpose of the Duaa, that we prepare our hearts before the month sets in. Duaa is the essence of Ibaadah as we have been informed by Rasulullah ﷺ. If our Ibaadah is bereft of Duaa, it is dry and barren. The entire essence and beauty of Ibaadah lies in Duaa. Therefore, when we make this Duaa, it spiritually prepares us for the month of Ramadhan.

وسلم رمضان لي:

It is possible that a person might be prepared physically, mentally and spiritually beforehand but if he faces calamities within the month of Ramadhan, it will be difficult for him to spend it correctly. This is why many of our Akabireen disliked travelling in Ramadhan although it is proven that Nabi ﷺ travelled in Ramadhan. Their reason perhaps was that it is best to spend Ramadhan in one's own abode with safety, security and peace.

This is to remind us that even with all the Asbaab and preparations, it is still possible that Allah ﷻ may not accept that Ibaadah and cast it away. It is possible that Ramadhan is only a source of hunger, thirst and exhaustion without any acceptance from Allah ﷻ. Nabi ﷺ therefore seeks acceptance with safety from Allah ﷻ.

Ibrahim and Ismail عليه السلام were from the chosen Ambiyaa of Allah ﷻ. Ibrahim عليه السلام was the grandfather of Nabi ﷺ and he was granted a lofty status by Allah to the extent that all the religions believe in him. His son Ismail عليه السلام was him through whose lineage Nabi ﷺ was born. Yet despite this, when they were commanded to rebuild the Ka'bah by Allah ﷻ they would pray.

ربنا تقبل منا إنك أنت السميع العليم

This is proof showing that after carrying out an action, our biggest worry ought to be whether this action would be accepted by Allah ﷻ or not. We need to fulfill all the prerequisites of an action and in addition to this 77, beg Allah ﷻ for acceptance.

There are certain actions that are necessary before the month of Ramadhan. This is such a blessed month that if a person is not forgiven in this month, his destruction has been prayed for by Rasulallah ﷺ:

بعد من أدرك رمضان ولم يغفر له

These actions are such that they can prevent us from gaining the forgiveness of Allah during Ramadhan. It is therefore imperative for us to free ourselves of these actions from beforehand:

1. Pictures of animate objects in our homes. Unfortunately, many Muslim homes have pictures stuck in their lounges. Pictures prevent the mercy of Allah from descending - even if it be the month of Ramadhan. This is the greatest loss - for a person to be deprived of the mercy of Allah in this great month.

2. Throw away all musical instruments from our homes. This includes televisions which are all too common in our homes. This also prevents the mercy of Allah. We also have many toys for children which play music. This is all completely Haraam.

3. Remove all pet dogs from our homes. The Shariah has only allowed dogs for the purpose of security.

4. If we have cut off ties with any of our relatives, we should seek forgiveness from now. It is stated in a Hadeeth:

لا يقبل عمل قاطع رحم

The actions of the one who severs ties will not be accepted.

5. We start seeking forgiveness from Allah from now. It is necessary for us to make Tawbah from now, more especially on the 15th night of Sha'ban.

VIRTUES OF THE 15TH OF SHA'BAN

Nabi ﷺ has stated:

هذه ليلة النصف من شعبان. إن الله يطلع إلى عباده في ليلة النصف من شعبان فيغفر للمستغفرين ويرحم للمسترحمين

We learn from Ahadeeth that this virtue is also for Tahajjud time but the speciality of this night is that the mercy of Allah begins descending from the beginning of the night. This descending of Allah ﷻ is as it befits His grandeur and majesty. It is then announced:

هل من سائل...

هل من مستغفر...

هل من تائب...

We have millions of needs and desires. Should we not then, turn away from the creation and instead present our needs solely at his doorstep?.. This is our opportunity to ask from Allah ﷻ. One of the greatest gifts that has been bestowed upon us is the gift of Duaa.

It is said that there was a king who had multiple wives but he loved one more than the others. The other wives naturally did not like this and mentioned this to the king. The king promised to answer them at the appropriate time. One day he gathered them and said to them that I am giving you the keys to my treasures and anything that you touch will belong to you. The wives all rushed to touch whatever they deemed most valuable. The most beloved wife however, did not touch any item of material value but rather touched the King instead. She said to him that you are the king of these treasures, if you belong to me then all the treasures are mine.

This is our example, when you learn to ask from Allah ﷻ, you will not envy any one from the creation.

ولله خزائن السموات والأرض

Ask from the king of all treasures and you will become independent of the creation. Remember the promise of Allah ﷻ is to answer our Duaas as long as we call out to Him:

ادعوني استجب لكم

What a beautiful, wondrous statement. A healing for the broken, a hope for the lost. Know that the promise of Allah ﷻ can never be false and He ﷻ has promised to answer us - as long as we call out to Him. Allah ﷻ therefore calls out and invites us to ask from Him during this night. Nabi ﷺ has taught us to ask even something as small as a shoelace. We do not shy away from asking from our Rabb.

We ought to ask for both Deen and Dunya from our Rabb. We ought to showcase our destitution before Him. If you can't sleep well, ask from Allah. If your shoes are torn, ask from Allah. If you are hungry, ask from Allah. When you keep begging and crying to Allah, you will form a connection of love and Yaqeen with our Rabb. The more you will witness your Duaas being accepted, the stronger your Yaqeen will become.

The night of the 15th is therefore a special occasion for us. Imaam Shafiee states that Duaas are accepted on 5 occasions:

1. Friday night
2. The night of Eidul Adha
3. The night Eid Fitr
4. The first of Rajab
5. The 15th of Sha'ban

Allama Ibn Taymiyyah also mentions that this night has great virtue and the basis of this is that all the Salaf attached great importance to this night.

It is not necessary to stay awake the whole night. If one can not manage to stay awake the whole night, one should pray Isha and Fajr with jaamah (for men) and on time (for women).

ACTIONS TO CARRY OUT ON THIS NIGHT

1. Four rakats of Tahajjud
2. Tilaawah of the Quran
3. Tasbeeh of لا إله إلا الله
4. Spend time in Istighfar at least 100 times
5. Send Durood upon Nabi ﷺ
6. Recite سبحان الله وبحمده سبحان الله العظيم in abundance. These are the most beloved phrases to Allah ﷻ and they fill up the scales. It is also stated that a person who recites this will have his sins forgiven even if they are as many as the foam of the ocean.
7. Spend time in sincere Duaa. Remember that Duaa should always begin with Tawbah.

Hasan Basri رحمه الله defined توبة النصوحة as:

ندم بالقلب

.To feel the guilt and shame in one's heart

واستغفار باللسان

To seek forgiveness with the tongue

وترك بالجوارح

To leave the sin physically

واضمار ان لا يعود

.And a strong intention to never return

Shaqiq Balkhi says that توبة النصوحة means for a person to constantly reprimand his Nafs for his sin and to never let go of the regret until he is sure that Allah ﷻ has forgiven his sin.

This night is our opportunity to create a strong foundation for the month of Ramadhan. If a person is forgiven during this night, he will be ready for the great month when it dawns. Our hearts will then be able to absorb the mercy and blessings of the month of Ramadhan.

Imagine the status of such a person who reaches the month of Ramadhan in this state. How wonderful will be his closeness to his Rabb!

A THOUGHT PROVOKING STORY

Hasan Basri رحمه الله narrates that he had a wonderful neighbour who had very good character but he was a fire worshipper. He hoped that Allah جل جلاله would guide him to Islam before his demise, due to his good traits. When he heard that his neighbour was on his deathbed, Hasan Basri رحمه الله visited him and asked him كيف حالك. He answered saying:

لي قلب عليل لا صحة لي
وبدن سقيم ولا قوة لي
وقبر موحش ولا أنيس لي
وسفر بعيد ولا زاد لي
وصراط دقيق ولا جواز لي
ونار حامية ولا بدن لي
وجنة عالية ولا نصيب لي
ورب عادل ولا حجة لي

I have an ailing heart bereft of health

I have a sick body bereft of strength

I have a lonely grave and I have no companion

I have a distant journey and I own no provisions

(Before me) is a flimsy bridge and I have no license

(Awaiting me) is a blazing fire and I have no body (to bear it)

(Awaiting me) is a lofty Jannah yet no share for me (in it)

I have a just Rabb, and I have no proof (to present).

Upon hearing this, Hasan Basri رحمه الله said to him: لم لا تسلم حتى تسلم
He said:

يا شيخ، ان المفتاح بيد الفتاح والقفل هاهنا

Hasan Basri رحمه الله then made Duaa saying:

إلهي وسيدي ومولاي،

ان كان سبق لهذا المجوسي عندك حسنة فعجل لها اليه قبل فراقه من الدنيا..

The man came into consciousness, looked towards me and said:

ان الفتاح ارسل المفتاح

امدد يمينك

He then said the shahadah and his Rooh then left. This shows that many times, a pious person can become the sabab of a person's forgiveness. To be under the shade of the pious becomes a means of forgiveness and mercy. This is why this Nisbah is such a great blessing.