

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

The Amīr/National President
Jamā'at Ahmadiyya,

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Dear Brother,

السلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ

Extracts from the Friday Sermon delivered by *Hadrat Khalīfa-tul-Masīh V* (May Allāh be his Helper) on 10th May 2019 at Baitul Futūh Mosque, London.

In the beginning of his Friday Sermon Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) recited verses 184-187 of Surah al-Baqarah, which are translated as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.
أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ
فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ ۗ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ ۗ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ.
شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۗ فَمَن شَهِدَ
مِنكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۗ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ
وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۗ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَىٰكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ.
وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۗ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا
بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ.

“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous. The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but whoso among you is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation — the feeding of a poor man. And whoso performs a good work with willing obedience, it is better for him. And fasting is good for you, if you only knew.

The month of Ramaḍān is that in which the Qur’ān was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein. But whoso is sick or is on a journey, shall fast the same number of other days. Allāh desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allāh for His having guided you and that you may be grateful.

And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way.” (2:184-187)

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: In these verses Allāh has described the obligatory nature of fasting, its importance, the obligations of the believers in this month, and the means for the acceptance of prayers. A month has been prescribed for us in which Allāh draws closer to His servants and Satan is put in chains. When Allāh is opening the door of His mercy and grace for His servants, it is important for us to listen to His words and fulfil our obligations with regard to fasting. The Holy Prophet (May Allāh’s Blessings be upon him) said, “If you but knew the excellences and

blessings of the month of Ramaḍān, and how Allāh showers His favour upon you in this month, you would wish that Ramaḍān were extended to the whole year so that you could gather Allāh's blessings all the year round." Allāh has prescribed fasting for our own benefit. We can derive spiritual, physical and other kinds of benefits from fasting. Therefore, in obedience to Allāh's commandment, we should strive for spiritual progress during the month of Ramaḍān.

In these verses, Allāh says that fasting has been made obligatory for every Muslim. The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: God desires that you decrease one kind of nourishment and increase the other. One who observes the fast should remember that the objective is not just to remain hungry, rather he should keep himself busy in remembrance of God so that he can attain exclusive devotion to God (*tabattul*) and detachment from worldly affairs (*inqita'*), which is to say that he becomes more inclined towards God and immersed in His worship and in His remembrance, and becomes less attached to the world. The business of the world has to go on, it cannot stop, but even as we engage in our worldly tasks, we should remember Allāh, bear His injunctions in mind, and praise Him. The Holy Prophet (May Allāh's Blessings be upon him) has said that merely going hungry is not something that will please Allāh.

Allāh says that fasting has been made obligatory for you and the purpose of fasting is that you may acquire righteousness (*taqwa*). What is righteousness (*taqwa*)? Righteousness (*taqwa*) means to be protected from spiritual and moral shortcomings. Until fasting produces in you a state where you can save yourself from all spiritual and moral deficiencies, it will serve no purpose. Explaining righteousness (*taqwa*), the Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: In order to become a righteous person (*muttaqī*) it is essential that one strictly give up the major sins, such as adultery, theft, usurping people's rights, cheating, arrogance, ostentation, demeaning others, and meanness. One should give up all baseness immoralities and strive to attain the higher morals. One should treat people with cordiality and compassion. One should prove one's devotion and sincerity to God and have a true relationship with Him. One should seek ways of serving that merit Allāh's praise. These are the qualities through which one can be called a *muttaqī*. Those who acquire all of these qualities are true righteous persons (*muttaqīs*).

The Holy Prophet (May Allāh's Blessings be upon him) says: "Allāh says that every action of man is for his own self, except for fasting; he fasts for my sake and I am his reward." That is to say, Allāh will reward him from Himself whatever He pleases. The Holy Prophet (May Allāh's Blessings be upon him) says: "Fasting is a shield. When anyone of you is fasting, he should not utter anything which is indecent and foul. And if someone abuse him or quarrels with him, he should merely say in reply, 'I am fasting.'"

The Holy Prophet (May Allāh's Blessings be upon him) says: "The foul smell that comes from the mouth of a person who is fasting is dearer to Allāh than the smell of musk." The Holy Prophet (May Allāh's Blessings be upon him) says: "There are two joys in store for one who observes fasting: The first is the joy he experiences when he opens the fast. And the second is the joy he will experience on account of his fasting when he will meet his Lord."

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: These are the various standards of righteousness (*taqwa*) that should be attained by anyone who observes fasting. Fasting

should be free of all worldly motives and the day of fasting should be spent shunning all kinds of spiritual and moral evils.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: In the next verse Allāh says that if during these few days of fasting you fall ill or have to travel, you are exempted from fasting, but the days of fasting that you have missed will have to be completed in other days during the year. This permission is for those who are permanently ill and have been advised by their doctor not to fast. And in such a case, if they can afford it, they should provide for the meal of one poor person. With the exception of someone who is so poor that he is himself dependent on charity, everyone who is unable to fast should provide meals for poor people in the same measure as the expenditure of his own meals. The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says that the purpose of expiation (*fidyah*) is to be able to acquire the ability to observe fast, and this can only come about through God's grace. The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: It is best if man prays: O my Lord, this is Your blessed month of whose blessings I am being deprived, and who knows whether or not I will live till next year or will be dead, and whether or not I will be able to complete the days of fasting that I have missed, or whether my health will allow me to do so or not. With these words one should seek help from Allāh.

As for those who suffer from chronic diseases or women who breastfeed or are pregnant and are unable to fast for years, expiation (*fidyah*) is sufficient, but it is important that they spend the month in remembrance of God and doing other virtuous deeds. If one merely gives expiation (*fidyah*) and forgets one's prayers and other good deeds, this does not make such a person a believer nor merits him/her the blessings of Ramaḍān.

In the next verse Allāh says that He revealed the Holy Qur'ān in this month. Thus the Holy Qur'ān has a strong affinity with Ramaḍān. We should try to recite it, ponder over its meanings, and seek guidance from it during the fast. By acting upon Qur'ānic injunctions we can derive true benefit from Ramaḍān.

Not everyone can understand the deeper meanings of the Holy Qur'ān, therefore, along with reading the Qur'ān with translation, it is also important to benefit from the *dars* or Qur'ān classes arranged in the mosques. It is also important to benefit from the Qur'ān *duroos* by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh IV (May Allāh shower His mercy upon him) that are being broadcast regularly on MTA. The Holy Prophet (May Allāh's Blessings be upon him) has also exhorted us to do excessive recitation of the Holy Qur'ān during Ramaḍān. Ahmadīs should recite the Holy Qur'ān regularly at all times, but it is even more important in Ramaḍān, otherwise mere fasting is of no use.

Righteousness (*taqwa*) is essential in understanding the Holy Qur'ān. The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: The knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān is in God's hand, and righteousness (*taqwa*) is the ladder by which we can access true meanings of the Holy Qur'ān. Ahmadīs should reflect on this; they should not just seek worldly knowledge but also try to gain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān. The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: "Read the Holy Qur'ān with deliberation, and love it like you have not loved anything else. It is indeed true what God has said to me:

الْحَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي الْقُرْآنِ

“All good is to be found in the Holy Qur'ān.”

Therefore, it is important to read, understand and follow the guidance of the Holy Qur'ān.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: In the next verse, Allāh says that the servants who seek me become even more motivated in the month of Ramaḍān, and so I come closer to them. I hear their supplications, and, if they call me with all sincerity, I accept their prayers. But for their prayers to be accepted it is essential that the one who prays should obey Me and obey My commandments and have firm faith in Me. Therefore, it is important to first reform ourselves and then to supplicate as a way for attracting God's blessings. The first step has to be taken by us. In Ramaḍān Allāh makes special provisions to accept our prayers. We have to make special efforts during this month, otherwise we cannot complain that Allāh does not accept our prayers.

With regard to how we should pray and how we can make our prayers such as are accepted by God, the Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: It is true that one who does not employ the material means does not truly pray, rather he tests God. It is therefore essential to make special efforts before praying, and this is the true meaning of prayer. The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: Do not think that we already pray every day, and that the *Salāt* we offer is also prayer; for the prayer which follows true knowledge and is born of Divine grace is of an altogether different colour and complexion. Such prayer is a thing that consumes, it is a fire that melts, it is a magnetic force that draws Divine mercy, it is a death but ultimately gives life, it is raging flood but finally turns into a boat. Through it every wrong is redressed and every poison finally becomes an antidote. Such is the effect of true prayer.

The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: Through prayer, God comes as close to you as your very life. The first gift of prayer is that it brings about a holy transformation in man. In short, prayer is the alchemy that turns a handful of dust into gold, and it is the water that cleanses inner impurities. Prayer softens the soul and flows like water onto the Divine threshold.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: Such is the state we have to inculcate so that we can witness the signs of the acceptance of prayers. As we observe fasting in Ramaḍān, may we also experience true prayer and supplication and witness the acceptance of our prayers. May Allāh accept us as His true servants and cover us in the mantle of His grace and forgiveness, and may we reap the blessings of this month. Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) appealed for prayers for Jamā'at Ahmadiyyah and Muslim Ummah at large.

At the end of the sermon, Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) informed the Jamā'at of the tragic death of Dr Tahir Aziz Sahib of Islamabad and Dr Iftikhar Ahmad Sahib of USA near Fateh Jang, Pakistan. Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) spoke about the deceased and led their funeral prayer in absentia after the Friday prayer.

Please convey these guidelines given by Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) to the members of your Jamā'at.

Jazākumullāh.

Wassalām,

(Ch. Hameedullah)

Wakīl A'lā,

Tahrīk Jadīd Anjuman Ahmadiyya Pakistan.

Dated: 16 May. 19