

Islamic Education- Madarij Assalikin- Lesson(033-100): The night of mid Sha'ban

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All-Knowing, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

Is the heedless person affected by Islamic celebrations?



Dear brothers, this is 33rd lesson on Madarij As-Salikin, the Ranks of the Seekers, but before we continue talking about the comparison between the obedient believer who has never disobeyed Allah the Almighty and the disobedient one who has committed sins, then repented of them, let's talk about the fifteenth night of Sha'ban, which is tonight.

Dear brothers, it is a fact that there are three kinds of people: the moderate believers (who only perform the obligatory prayers), the believers who are foremost in performing righteous deeds and the disobedient people who are heedless, sinning, deviated, negligent, careless, and gone astray. These three kinds of people have different attitudes towards Islamic celebrations and the one who has

no connection with Allah- who never obeys Him- who is far away from Him, who is heedless of his religion and is wholly engaged in wrongdoing will not get affected at all by Islamic events such as the Night of Isra and Mi'raj (the Night Journey), the fifteenth night of Sha'ban, the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree), and so forth. Actually, it is among the moderate and the foremost believers that the different attitudes as regards performing righteous deeds are to be found.

Difference between the foremost and moderate believers:

Consider the example of a dutiful son who every day shows great respect, honor, reverence, and kindness to his parents. Nothing, then, changes when Mother's Day arrives as he is good to his parents every single day—he visits them daily, fulfills their needs and provides them with everything they want. The careless, by contrast, are in need of Mother's Day in order to be reminded of their duty. Likewise, all the nights of the believer foremost in performing righteous deeds are like the fifteenth night of Sha'ban; all his days are like the days of Ramadan; and all his nights in Ramadan are like the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) as he always does his best in getting closer to Allah and in the way of the truth. It is the believer who only performs the obligatory acts of worship whom Islamic celebrations cause to think. They motivate him to obey Allah, to increase his knowledge of Islam and lead him to improve and increase his acts of worship. Undoubtedly, there is no harm in

celebrating the Night of Isra and Mi'raj (the Night Journey) and in celebrating the fifteenth night of Sha'ban. However, the more knowledge of Islam one acquires the closer one is to Allah and to the real meanings of these Virtuous Days. Some of these meanings are mentioned below in several of the noble ahadith of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

What is expected of you:

First of all, I mentioned earlier that the acts of worship have an outstanding importance in the Sight of Allah, therefore the necessity of a prelude. To illustrate the point, when we pray the voluntary prayer before the obligatory prayer and afterwards, the former is just a prelude to the obligatory prayer and the latter is to repair the possible defect in it. Also, the pilgrim puts on the garb of ihram, (two clean, unstitched, preferably white pieces of cloth) acquired from the "miqat" (any one of the appointed places in Mecca where pilgrims make a vow of pilgrimage), although there is still a considerable distance between him and the Ka'bah, in order to prepare himself psychologically and emotionally for this great meeting with his Lord the Almighty. Furthermore, according to the teachings of Islam, before our children reach puberty we should train them to perform the obligatory prayers, to fast, to recite the Noble Qur'an, and to love the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Similarly, the month of Ramadan is a training course as well as an annual act of worship.

The Muslim in Ramadan reaches a qualitative jump in reference to his understanding, creed, perception, obedience to Allah, piety, prayers, night prayers, recitation of the Noble Qur'an, spending his money on sadaqah, and so on. So, the disobedient repents to Allah, the repentant increase their acts of worship and the foremost in righteous deeds excel themselves. Thus, a marked qualitative jump takes place in Ramadan. However, the real problem is that most people, present company excepted, reach a qualitative jump in Ramadan but after it has passed they return to committing wrongdoings and thus their life is full of ups and downs as regards obedience to Allah. By contrast, the real believer is the one who whenever reaches a qualitative jump in Ramadan maintains it throughout the whole year. Then, when next Ramadan comes, he achieves another qualitative jump and sticks to it throughout the year, and so on, until he meets his Lord (after his death) at his highest possible degree.

So the first fact is – when Ramadan comes, we should achieve a qualitative jump and then keep at it all year round.

Relation between the night of mid Sha'ban and Ramadan:

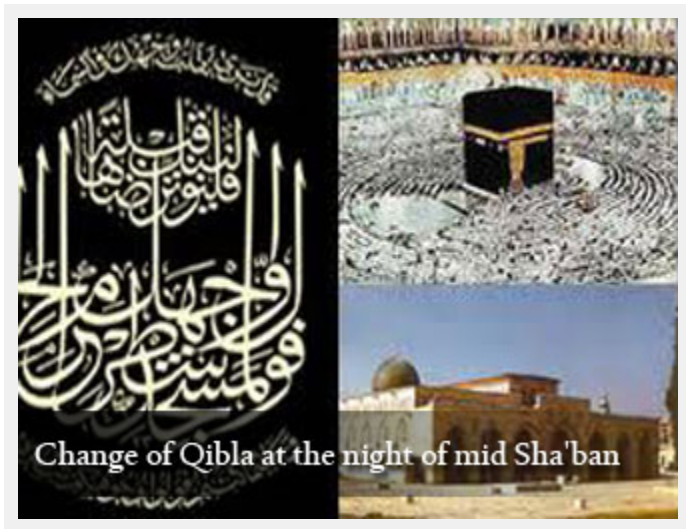
What is the relation between 15th night of Sha'ban and Ramadan?

Actually, the Muslim must fast all the days of Ramadan when it comes. This sudden change from the ordinary level in worship to an excellent one needs a prelude. If there are two points, one here and one above it, there should be a rising line, going up from the first point to the second one. This ascending line represents one's enthusiasm for performing acts of worship and his doing best so that his Lord the Almighty may accept his fast. Thus, we are in the month preparatory for Ramadan – the month of Sha'ban. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to perform numerous acts of worship during the month of Sha'ban such as du'aa



(supplication), prayers, night prayers and other righteous and beneficent deeds.

Why was Jerusalem the first qiblah for Muslims?



It was in the month of Sha'ban, in its fifteenth night, that the qiblah (the direction in which Muslims turn in prayer) was changed from Jerusalem to the Sacred House of Allah (the Ka'bah). Why did Allah first order Muslims through the Sunnah of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to stand in prayer in the direction of Jerusalem? Because, in my personal opinion, there were many idols in the Ka'bah, which the disbelievers of the tribe of Quraish used to be proud of. If the Muslims had been ordered to turn this way in their prayers, perhaps this would have established the notion of idol worship which was prohibited in the Noble Qur'an. Therefore, they were ordered first to stand in prayer in the direction of Jerusalem until tawheed (belief in Oneness of Allah the Almighty) was deeply rooted on

the Arabian Peninsula. When the belief in Allah got strong in Muslims' hearts, they were ordered to turn in the direction of the Sacred House of Allah and many ayaat were revealed transmitting this order. The Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who were praying in the Al-Madina mosque, heard about the change of the qiblah and out of their great submission to Allah's Command, shifted their qiblah during their salah. I visited this mosque many years ago. There were still two mihrab (prayer niches) there –one in the direction of Jerusalem and the other in the direction of the Ka'bah, but when I visited it a year later, the Jerusalem niche was removed and only the niche towards the Noble Ka'bah remained.

Anyway, in reference to the fifteenth night of Sha'ban –in this blessed night the qiblah was changed from Jerusalem to the Noble Sacred House of Allah. This is one of the merits of this night.

What the companions used to do in Sha'ban:

An-Nasai reported from Usama bin Zaid, may Allah be pleased with him, that he asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: ((O Messenger of Allah! I have seen you fasting in the month of Sha'ban as frequently as I have never seen you fasting in any other month." To which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, replied:

"This month (Sha'ban) between Rajab and Ramadan is neglected by many people. And it is a month in which the accounts of the deeds (of human beings) are presented before the Lord of the Universe, and I wish for my deeds to be presented at a time when I am fasting.")

Whenever the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, saw the new moon of Sha'ban, they used to recite the Noble Qur'an a lot and the rich ones used to pay zakat (the poor's due) to help the weak and the poor to manage their financial affairs in Ramadan.

Dear brothers, according to these several noble ahadith Sha'ban is preparation for Ramadan, and the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to supplicate Allah in this month more than ever. Therefore, the fifteenth night of Sha'ban is one of the best times for du'aa.

A false supplication which lacks Islamic foundation:

In fact, supplication is a means the servant has of connecting directly with his Lord the Almighty. However, sometimes false supplications are made such as, for example, the following one:

"O Allah! If you have written in Your Book that I be miserable, deprived, banished and tight-fisted, erase, O Allah, through Your bounty my misery, deprivation, banishment and stinginess."

This supplication has no Islamic foundation; that is neither the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, nor his noble Companions ever said it. Actually, when we supplicate Allah the Almighty we should do that as the Prophet did, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

The concept of fatalism is against the teachings of Islam:

Fatalism implies that the disbeliever was created as such and that Allah has preordained it for him even though he has not committed any wrongdoing, and that Allah will definitely admit him to Hellfire according to His Divine Decree.

These meanings, dear brothers, are against the essence of Islam which has been derived from the Noble Qur'an. Allah the Almighty says:

"Those who took partners (in worship) with Allah will say: "If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners (in worship) with Him, nor would our fathers, and we would not have forbidden anything (against His Will)." Likewise belied those who were before them, (they argued falsely with Allah's Messengers), till they tasted of Our Wrath. Say: "Have you any knowledge (proof) that you can produce before us? Verily, you follow nothing but guess and you do nothing but lie."

[Al-An'am, 148]

The proof that man has the power of free choice:

When you thoughtfully recite the whole Noble Qur'an, you will find that man has free will. Allah the Almighty says:

"And say: "The truth is from your Lord." Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve. Verily, We have prepared for the Zalimun (polytheists and wrong-doers, etc.), a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them (disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah). And if they ask for help (relief, water, etc.) they will be granted water like boiling oil, that will scald their faces. Terrible the drink, and an evil Murtafaqa (dwelling, resting place, etc.)!"

[Al-Kahf, 29]

"Verily, We showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful."

[Al-Insan, 3]

"For all there will be degrees (or ranks) according to what they did. And your Lord is not unaware of what they do."

[Al-An'am, 132]

"For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers). So hasten towards all that is good. Wheresoever you may be, Allah will bring you together (on the Day of Resurrection). Truly, Allah is Able to do all things."

[Al-Baqarah, 148]

Some scholars said that the order in this ayah ("hasten towards all that is good") indicates the freedom of choice.

To further illustrate this point let us consider a man who is standing in a 60-cm wide passageway, his shoulders touching the firm boundaries of this way. Is it reasonable to ask him to turn right? How could he do it? Therefore, given the fact that man is ordered to do something or to avoid doing it implies that he has free will.

Consider the following crucial point: If Allah the Almighty did the same as Imam Al-Hassan, may Allah be pleased with him, who obliged his servants to obey him, the reward would carry no meaning.

Similarly, if Allah the Almighty had ordered His servants to disobey Him, the punishment would be meaningless; and if He had abandoned them, there would be no meaning to the Allah's Promise and Threat, and that would indicate a flaw in Allah's Capability.

Imam Ali was asked about the Divine Decree:

Once, Imam Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was asked: "Was our travel to Syria out of the Divine Decree?" He said: "Woe to you! If it was an obligatory fate, there would be no meaning to Allah's Promise and Threat, and there would be no meaning to the reward and punishment." Rather, Allah has ordered His servants to obey Him and warned them against disobeying him while having the power of free choice; and His Orders are easy enough to obey, not hard. Also, Allah rewards His servants abundantly in return even for their small righteous deeds and He does not force to be obeyed or disobeyed. He has not sent Messengers in vain and has not sent the Books as amusement.

In conclusion, man has the power of free choice.

Umar applied Islamic punishment on a man twice:

You all know the story of the man who was caught drinking alcohol. He was brought to the Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, and when Umar ordered the Islamic punishment to be applied, that man said: "By Allah, O Amir of the Believers! Allah has preordained that for me." So Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, whose knowledge of the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah was profound, said: "Carry out the Islamic punishment on him twice; the first time because he has drunk wine and the second one because he has invented a lie against Allah." He also said to a thief: "Woe to you! The Divine Decree never changes your situation from having a free will to being compelled."

What do the noble ayaat below affirm?

When you recite the Noble Qur'an thoughtfully, you will come across many ayaat which demonstrate the disbeliever's remorse for his kufr (disbelief):

"So that I may do good in that which I have left behind!" No! It is but a word that he speaks, and behind them is Barzakh (a barrier) until the Day when they will be resurrected."

[Al-Mu'minun, 100]

"Lest a person should say: "Alas, my grief that I was undutiful to Allah (i.e. I have not done what Allah has ordered me to do), and I was indeed among those who mocked [at the truth! i.e. La ilaha ill-Allah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), the Quran, and Muhammad PBUH and at the faithful believers, etc.]"

[Az-Zumar, 56]

"And (remember) the Day when the Zalim (wrong-doer, oppressor, polytheist, etc.) will bite at his hands, he will say: "Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger (Muhammad PBUH)."

[Al-Furqan, 27]

"He will say: "Alas! Would that I had sent forth (good deeds) for (this) my life!"

[Al Fajr, 24]

These noble ayaat show the disbelievers' regret on account of their bad deeds and wrongdoing. Actually, had they been compelled to commit sins, they would not be now regretting what they have done.

Man has free will and is compelled at the same time:

When you recite the Noble Qur'an, you will find that you have free will in reference to what you are charged with (following Allah's Orders). On the other hand, you have no choice as regards matters such as your parents, place and date of birth, your family, your society, or your personal characteristics. Given that you have no choice about such issues, you will not be held accountable for being handsome or ugly, weak or powerful, short or tall; nor about the grade of your intelligence or amount of wealth:

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned. "Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us (Jews and Christians); our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us Forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Maula (Patron, Supporter and Protector, etc.) and give us victory over the disbelieving people."

[Al-Baqarah, 286]

The meaning of "kasb" (earnings):

What is the meaning of "kasb" (earnings)? When you are inclined to obey Allah, this inclination is "kasb"; while when you are inclined to disobey Allah, this inclination to disobedience is "iktisab". "He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned (which is "kasaba" in Arabic), and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned" (which is "iktasaba" in Arabic).

In other words, you take part in defining your destiny; goodness and evil are inside you, while Paradise is the absolute grace and the Hellfire is the absolute justice. So, you enter Paradise out of Allah's Generosity and Bounty, while when someone enters Hell it is because of his bad deeds, his bad choice and the results of his wrongdoing.

The turning point:

Actually, you should avoid the du'aa (supplication) which is not in harmony with the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Rather, you should use the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in your du'aa as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, clarified and explained everything in detail, and in a noble hadith Allah the Almighty describes the human soul: "He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned." There is a critical point as regards the matters you are compelled to. If they precede your existence, then it is for your advantage, while if they come after your existence, then you pay the price of your bad choice.

Let me expand on this very important point. The matters you are compelled to, decided before your existence such as your parents, characteristics, appearance, abilities, capacities, and so on, are to your advantage. Imam Al-Ghazzali said: "You are not capable of getting anything better than what Allah has granted you." On the other hand, you will pay the price of your bad choice for the matters you are compelled to and which come after your existence. In other words, when one makes a good choice to obey Allah the Almighty, Allah will lead him to goodness in this worldly life and in the Hereafter, while when one chooses to disobey Him, Allah will lead him to calamities in order to make that person pay the price of his bad choice, in order to discipline and punish him, to put an end to his wrongdoing or to restrain him from bad actions. Hence, the compulsion which comes after your choice is based on it and is the price you pay for it, either as a reward or as a punishment; while the compulsion which precedes your choice is for your benefit.

In conclusion, you should know for sure that what precedes your existence is to your advantage, while what comes after it is the price you pay for your own choice.

What do the following ayat and ahadith clarify to us?

Admittedly, one of the most precise expressions of negation in the Arabic language is "ma kana", "it was not" (Allah Who...). Allah the Almighty says:

"Has not the story reached them of those before them? - The people of Nuh (Noah), 'Ad, and Thamud, the people of Ibrahim (Abraham), the dwellers of Madyan (Midian) and the cities overthrown [i.e. the people to whom Lout (Lot) preached], to them came their Messengers with clear proofs. So it was not Allah Who wronged them, but they used to wrong themselves."

[Al-Tawbah, 70]

In this ayah, Allah the Almighty does not only negate His causing people to commit wrongdoing but He also negates Himself as having anything to do with what is related to injustice. That is, Allah the Almighty neither wills injustice nor accepts orders or causes it to happen between His servants.

Consider the following example, already mentioned: there is a big difference between saying that so and so did not steal the money and saying that it was not so and so who stole it. In the former statement you are negating the act of theft, while in the latter statement you are negating the situation—he never steals, it contradicts his temper, morals, and values; he would never want or accept it, nor be satisfied with it, nor approve of it, nor call to it. All these implications are negated with respect to him. Allah the Almighty says: "So it was not Allah Who wronged them." He also says:

"Have you not seen those who claim sanctity for themselves. Nay - but Allah sanctifies whom He pleases, and they will not be dealt with injustice even equal to the extent of a fatila (a scallid thread in the long slit of a date-stone)."

[Al-Nisa, 49]

"And whoever does righteous good deeds, male or female, and is a true believer in the Oneness of Allah (Muslim), such will enter Paradise and not the least injustice, even to the size of a Naqira

(speck on the back of a date-stone), will be done to them."

[Al-Nisa verse 124]

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said in a hadith qudsi that Allah the Almighty says:

(No injustice today, O My servants! I have forbidden oppression Myself and made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another.)

So these noble ayaat and ahadith are obvious and clearly indicate that Allah the Almighty is far above all kinds of injustice. Allah the Almighty says:

"So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it.* And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it."

[Az-Zalzalah, 7-8]

A Bedouin came once to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said to him: "O Messenger of Allah! Advise me but do not make it too long," to which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, recited: "So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it." The Bedouin said: "It is enough for me." The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said then: "This man has comprehended the essence of Islam."

Sha'ban is preparation for Ramadan:

In reference to the fifteenth night of Sha'ban it should be said first of all that it prepares the soul for the meeting with the month of fasting, putting it at its highest level of turning to Allah and fully preparing it for this noble great month. Actually, every extremely significant thing is in need of a prelude while the silly thing does not need it. In Ramadan the Muslim hopes that Allah will free him from Hellfire. He also hopes for his station to be exalted in the Sight of Allah as well as his grade, his rank, his value, his intentions and his expectations. So as long as he may be exalted in this noble month, it should be preceded by a prelude, which is the righteous deeds in the month of Sha'ban, such as fasting, spending money on sadaqah, reciting the Noble Qur'an and other good deeds.

To illustrate it more let us say that if you want to run fast between two points, you should make some physical motions before the starting point to increase your speed; while if you start moving at the starting point, you will reach your top speed after a considerable distance has been covered. This is, to a certain degree, the meaning of the preparation for Ramadan, which is Sha'ban.

Let us also recall once again that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to make abundant du'aa in the noble month of Sha'ban.

What the scholars deduced from the noble ayah below:

I have talked about du'aa in detail in last Friday's khutbah. I mentioned that there are 13 ayaat in the Noble Qur'an in which Allah the Almighty says: "say" after "they ask you". Allah the Almighty says:

"They ask you (O Muhammad) about the new moons. Say: These are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the pilgrimage. It is not Al-Birr (piety, righteousness, etc.) that you enter the houses from the back but Al-Birr (is the quality of the one) who fears Allah. So enter

houses through their proper doors, and fear Allah that you may be successful."

[Al-Baqarah, 189]

"They ask you (O Muhammad) concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: "In them is a great sin, and (some) benefit for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit." And they ask you what they ought to spend. Say: "That which is beyond your needs." Thus Allah makes clear to you His Laws in order that you may give thought."

[Al-Baqarah, 219]

"They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: that is an adha (a harmful thing for a husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses), therefore keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they have purified (from menses and have taken a bath). And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah has ordained for you (go in unto them in any manner as long as it is in their vagina). Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers, etc.)."

[Al-Baqarah, 222]

Again, this expression is found in 13 ayaat. It is only in one ayah that Allah the Almighty says:

"And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright."

[Al-Baqarah, 186]

In this ayah, thus, the word "say" is not used. Instead, Allah the Almighty says: "And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge)." Some scholars have deduced from the fact of the word "say" not having been mentioned that there are no screen or mediator between the servant and his Lord the Almighty. Rather, the du'aa is a means of direct connection between him and his Lord. It is indeed an effective weapon as you can supplicate Allah at any time, whereas if you want to meet somebody even of a modest social status, you have to arrange this appointment two weeks earlier or you have to wait many hours at his door. By contrast, Allah the Almighty says: "And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge)."

What is the meaning of the following ayah?

Allah the Almighty says:

"Say (O Muhammad): "I am only a man like you. It has been inspired to me that your Ilah (God) is One Ilah (God i.e. Allah). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord."

[Al-Kahf, 110]

The two ayaat are absolutely invaluable. I mean, if you want to meet Allah the Almighty, you only have to perform a righteous deed, enter any house of Allah (any mosque) and pray two rak'ahs. You will then feel extreme spiritual delight, tears will flow from your eyes, and you will feel that you are the happiest person in the world. This is the real meaning of the ayah: "Say (O Muhammad): "I am only a man like you. It has been inspired

to me that your Allah (God) is One Allah (God i.e. Allah). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord."

Allah is near to you, but what do you ask Him?

Allah the Almighty says:

"And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge)."

I mentioned in my last Friday's khutbah that the question to be asked here is: What do you ask Allah for? It has been said: Tell me what you ask for and I will tell you who you really are. What really concerns you? What do you worry about? What are you searching for in your life? What are you hoping for?

"And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me..."

Are you concerned about the fleeting pleasures of this worldly life such as its glitter, trade, earnings, houses, wives, and so on, or about how to please Allah the Almighty; about whether Allah is pleased with you, about the ways of getting closer to Him, the ways of obeying Him and earning His love.

"And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me..."

You may come across people who shout out their supplications, raising their hands to the sky and saying eloquently rhyming words which were meticulously prepared beforehand, when Allah the Almighty says about Prophet Zakariyah :

"When he called out his Lord (Allah) a call in secret,"

[Maryam, 3]

Thus, you can ask Allah without moving your lips, from the bottom of your heart. Thus, du'aa is a subtle weapon. As I said before, you may have to exert a great deal of effort to meet a man of medium status, while Allah the Almighty responds as soon as you say "O Allah".

A thoughtful pause:

We should always make a thoughtful pause when reading this noble hadith: Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

(Allah Most High descends each night to the lowest heaven in the last third of the night. He says until the Fajr time comes, "Is there anyone who is repenting so that I may accept his repentance? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness, so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone asking of Me, so that I may grant him his request?)

[Muslim]

And when you say in your salah "Allah hears the one who praises Him", you should highly glorify Him for His Blessings.

A question you may ask:

During our talk about the fifteenth night of Sha'ban we mentioned du'aa, its value and how it comes to be the believer's weapon. However, you may ask yourself why Muslims ask Allah to destroy their enemy day and night, on every occasion connected with the Deen, after every salah, in khutbah, in every speech, celebration, marriage ceremony, as well as on sad occasions. Yet, it may look as if Allah were not responding them.

The answer is to be found in the following noble ayah:

"And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor)."



Actually, du'aa may turn into a meaningless act or a pointless habit, like when someone asks a sheikh to supplicate Allah for him. The scholar supplicates Allah and that man says "Ameen" while his heart is completely heedless.

Allah the Almighty says:

"I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor)"

In fact, Allah Most High responds to the believer's request when he truly depends on Him alone; never depends on anyone else, nor on his wealth, his social status, a relative of his, or anything else. So when he really and truly calls on Allah, Allah will respond.

When is our du'aa answered?

Allah the Almighty teaches us what to do so that our supplication be answered:

"And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright."

[Al-Baqarah, 186]

This means that in order for Him to respond to your supplication you should believe in Allah and follow His Orders. Actually, this ayah establishes the rule for pronouncing du'aa: You should believe in Allah and abide by His Command in order to have your supplication answered. So, our talk about supplicating in the fifteenth night of Sha'ban is also about du'aa in general because supplication is the essence of worship. In fact, Muslims perform salah, fast, perform hajj (pilgrimage), pay zakah, hold on firmly to Allah's Commands and perform righteous deeds in order to get closer to their Lord. Thus, getting closer to Allah is the believer's sole aim, as the Prophet said, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

((Du'aa is the essence of worship.))

[At-Tirmidhi]

It means that du'aa constitutes the supreme level of getting closer to Allah. That is, when you call on Him while you are in distress, you make your du'aa wholeheartedly and your call for His help is earnest. Anas bin Malik reported that the Prophet said, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

((Du'aa is the essence of worship.))

[At-Tirmidhi]

Abu Hurairah reported that he also said:

((Nothing is more honorable to Allah Most High than du'aa.))

[At-Tirmidhi]

Verily, nothing is more dear to Allah than supplication.

Du'aa is a sign of faith:



Dua' is a sign of faith

The subtlest aspect here is that Allah the Almighty says:

"Say (O Muhammad to the disbelievers): "My Lord pays attention to you only because of your invocation to Him. But now you have indeed denied (Him). So the torment will be yours for ever (inseparable permanent punishment)."

[Al-Furqan, 77]

The meaning here is that had you not invoked Allah the Almighty, he would not have paid attention to you. In other words, du'aa is a sign of faith because your invocation of Allah means that you believe in His Existence, you believe that He hears

you, you believe that He will respond, and you believe that He is able to do anything. It is this belief that Allah is Omnipotent, that He exists, that He is All-Hearing and Most-Merciful that leads you to invoke Him. Allah the Almighty says:

"Say (O Muhammad to the disbelievers): "My Lord pays attention to you only because of your invocation to Him. But now you have indeed denied (Him). So the torment will be yours for ever (inseparable permanent punishment)."

[Al-Furqan, 77]

The obedient who never commits sins versus the repentant:

Let us go back to our subject matter. Some scholars express their preference for the obedient who have never committed wrongdoing to the disobedient who have repented of their sins, and they present their proofs.

First of all, they say: The most perfect and the best people are those who obey Allah most, so the one who has never disobeyed Allah is better than the repentant one.

In addition to that, Allah detests the disobedient during their wrongdoing, while He is pleased with the obedient during their performing the righteous deed. Thus, there is a big difference between the two cases; between the time one spends on making Allah detest one's deeds and the time one spends on making Allah pleased with one's deeds. Also, when one commits sins one may repent afterwards or not, so he is exposed to a hazard, and if Allah disciplines him by a calamity, he may respond to it or not, benefit from this calamity or not. Hence, there is a real menace and a tremendous risk in committing sins.

In other words, how can you be sure that you will repent of that sin? In fact, there are people who insist on committing sins till death arrives and never repent.

So, the obedient enjoy peace of mind while the disobedient run a great risk and expose themselves to peril. It is as if the obedient surrounded themselves with a strong fence of righteous deeds, while the disobedient have made many gaps in their fence through which Shaytan enters and ruins their internal structure, purity and connection with Allah the Almighty.

What the Companions agreed unanimously on:

Consider this crucial point which I frequently mention: The Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, agreed unanimously that any act of disobedience to Allah the Almighty arises from ignorance,

This means that you do not disobey Allah except when you are ignorant.

Masrouq, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

((It is enough knowledge for man to fear Allah and it is enough ignorance for him to be proud of his knowledge (which prevents him from following the truth.))

[At-Tirmidhi]

No matter how knowledgeable you are, as long as you persist in committing wrongdoing, you do not really know Allah. So what truly measures your knowledge is your obedience to Allah, not the elegant style or fluency of your speech, or being able to answer each question you are asked. Thus, what truly evaluates your knowledge which will rescue you from Hellfire on the Day of Resurrection is your obedience to Allah the Almighty. Hence, the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, considered that any act of disobedience to Allah results from ignorance.

Kinds of ignorance:

There are two kinds of ignorance: that related to knowledge and that related to behavior.

Hence, committing sins results either from ignorance or from stupidity; that is, the one who deviates (from the straight Path of Allah) is a fool, and the one who commits a sin is an ignorant. Therefore, ignorance is man's bitterest enemy. Allah the Almighty says:

"And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance, and perform As-Salat (Iqamatas Salat), and give Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah wishes only to remove ArRijs (evil deeds and sins, etc.) from you, O members of the family (of the Prophet), and to purify you with a thorough" purification."

[Al-Ahzab, 33]

The first stage of ignorance is that which leads to unawareness. So when one commits sins, his enemy, Shaytan, will try to lead him astray, while when one never commits sins, Shaytan will despair of him. So, if you take one step towards disobedience, Shaytan will be full of hope to induce you to commit more and more sins.

The most important thing is that a sin must be expiated either by a calamity which erases it or by a great righteous deed, or by the tomb torture, or by the agony of death, or by the torture of Hellfire.

In a noble hadith the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said about his Lord:

"By My pride and might, I never take the soul of my believing servant until I afflict him for every sin he has committed, either with a sickness in his body, or shortage in his sustenance, or calamity in his wealth or in his children, and if any sins remain, I make the agony of death more severe for him, until he meets Me as sinless as the day when he was born.)"

In conclusion:

In our next meeting, insha-Allah, I will talk about the merit of the one who has committed a sin, then repented to Allah and his repentance has been accepted. And I will mention how Allah had mercy on him and accepted him so that now he can be treated as the one who has never committed wrongdoing. Actually, it is great not to disobey Allah, but as for the one who has committed a sin then repented to Allah and his repentance was accepted, he attains a great status in the Sight of Allah, because Allah is pleased with the repentance of his servant.

Consider the case of two young men in the same family. One of them is the first in his class, the other son is completely deviated from the Straight Path of Allah. Thus, the first son is always on the right path, but when the deviated son returns back to the right path, the father will be extremely pleased with him. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

((Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant, when he turns penitently towards Him than one of you would be on finding a lost camel. Allah is happier with the repentance of His worshipper than a sterile woman who has conceived; more than somebody who got lost and who found his way; and more than a thirsty man who has found water)).

After a battle, a woman was searching for her lost child and when she found it amongst the prisoners, she took hold of it and pressed it against her chest. Thereupon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

((Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than this woman is with her child.))

And there are many other noble ahadith which confirm this concept.

Thus, our next lesson, insha-Allah, will coincide with the fifteenth night of Sha'ban so we will perform the night prayer, mention and invoke Allah much.

Some scholars say: If you pray Salat al Qiyam (the night prayer) before the dawn prayer, it will be as if you have prayed all night.

So, if you pray some rak'ahs at night and recite some ayaat of the Noble Qur'an, you will be among those who respond to Allah and His Messenger and pass the fifteenth night of Sha'ban performing acts of worship.