

## The virtues of Sha'ban and the Middle Night of Sha'ban

### Friday Khutbah (24-08-07)

**DISCLAIMER:** This reminder was originally delivered in Arabic. Any meanings lost in translation are not to be attributed to the speaker as reminders are translated by volunteers. The mosque has no official translator and volunteers often have no formal qualifications to translate on the day. Please forgive any errors as they are from our human weakness and any right guidance is from God/Allah.

Indeed we are in a time when the believer is subjected to fluctuations and God has stretched out for him his lifespan. Every day that he resides in this world is a treasure. It is a booty that he gathers as his provision and he seeks from it what he is able of deeds to the best of his capacity. God says:

“Whosoever desires the reward of the Hereafter, We give him increase in his reward. And whosoever desires the reward of this world, We give him thereof and he has no portion in the Hereafter” [ash Shura v20]

Sha'ban is an introduction to the month of Ramadan and just like Ramadan - fasting and recitation of the Qur'an has been prescribed within it in order to meet Ramadan by having our selves prepared in obedience to the Merciful and for such reasons amongst others, the Prophet peace be upon him (pbuh) would increase his fasting in this blessed month and grab this time whereas many of us are heedless of its virtues. And remember who was he – he was the messenger of God PBUH, he was the one forgiven his past and future shortcomings.

Aisha, may God be pleased with her, said that: “God’s Messenger used to fast until people would say that he would never stop observing fasts and he would abandon fasting till one day people one would say that he would never observe the fast. I never saw the Messenger of God fast for a whole month except in the month of Ramadan and I did not see him observe fasting in any month more than in the month of Sha'ban” [Muslim and Bukhari]

And for this reason the forerunners of the earliest generation would make a new start in Sha'ban and use it to prepare themselves for Ramadan. This month of Sha'ban is often described as the month for the reciters (of Qur'an). It is also said that the previous month of Rajab is the month for planting seeds; the month of Sha'ban is the month in which you water the seeds and the month of Ramadan is the month of harvest; wherein the seeds bear fruit. How can we expect the seeds to bear fruit in Ramadan if we do not plant any seeds in the previous months.

### The 15<sup>th</sup> night of Sha'ban – Nisfu Syaaban, Shabi Baraat or Laylatul Baraa'ah

Mu`adh ibn Jabal (may God be pleased with him) relates that the Prophet, (may God bless him and his Household and grant them peace) said,

**“God looks at His creation in the night of the middle of Sha`ban; He forgives all His creation except for one who associates partners with God (mushrik) or a one who has illegitimate hatred or enmity of others (mushahin)”** [Tabarani and ibn Haban narrated it and it is a sound Hadith]

There are three important points regarding this Hadith of the middle night of Sha'ban and they are the following:

## 1. Associating Partners in Lordship with God

God forgives all His servants this night except those who associate partners with Him. The father of Prophets, the leader of the monotheists- Abraham (Peace be upon him) feared for both himself and his nation the worship of idols. Regarding Prophet Abraham, God Almighty says: "And save me and my sons from worshipping the idols". Then Prophet Abraham explained what caused him to fear that: 'My Lord, indeed the idols have led astray many people" (Surah Ibrahim: 35-36). This was Prophet Abraham- how can one feel safe and secure for not committing partners with God. No one is safe from falling into the traps of the devil and the means in which he attracts the believing servants of God to commit sins. We will focus upon two of these:

- a) the trap of believing what fortune-tellers, psychics or those who have befriended Jinn say about what will benefit and harm you (a practice which is now becoming more widespread). The Prophet (pbuh) forbade going to fortune-tellers- whether it is in the form of phoning them or working with them. The Prophet said:

**"Do not go to fortune-tellers"** [related by Muslim c].

This is not permitted, even if involved the Qur'an in some way to do this. They have disbelieved in what was sent down to the Prophet and in the authentic Prophetic saying (just mentioned).

- b) the trap of riya - doing good deeds/worship to gain praise or fame or beautifying them to be seen by others or to show off rather than to please God. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

**"The thing I fear most for you is the minor association of partners with God (shirk)." He (pbuh) was asked what that was, he replied: "Riya"** for indeed God will say on the Day of Resurrection when people are receiving their rewards, 'Go to those for whom you were showing off in the material world and see if you can find any reward from them.'" [Ahmed, Baihaquee and Tabarane narrated this and it is an authentic Hadith]

God Almighty has warned all His prophets (though they were the best and most sincere of creation) about worshipping others besides Him and advised them that their actions will come to nothing if they do so:

**"It has been revealed to you and those before you: 'If you associate others with God, your actions will come to nothing and you will be among the losers.'" (39:65)**

He then says:

**"...but serve God alone and be amongst the ones who are thankful". (39:66)**

## 2. Having Rancour against God's creation

The definition of "shahna" is a Muslim despising his fellow brother/sister in humanity out of hatred for him due to matters of the world. The serious consequence of having illegitimate rancour and hatred between people is being prevented from the forgiveness of God.

As is mentioned in the authentic saying of the Prophet PBUH related by Abu Hurairah:

**“the doors of paradise are opened on Mondays and Thursdays. Every slave who does not associate partners with God is forgiven. However, if there is a person who has spite and rancour against his brother, He says about them: “Leave these two alone in their condition till they come to a settlement.” [Muslim]**

God (Glory be to Him the Most High) describes the believers’ concern for this in their supplication:

**“O our Lord forgive us and our brethren in faith who went before us and do not put in our hearts hatred for those who believe. O our Lord you are the most kind, the most merciful” [59:10].**

Some amongst the forerunners said: **“the best of deeds is making tranquillity in the hearts and generosity in the souls and advice (nasiha) for the community (Ummah).”**

### **3. Taking Care not to innovate aspects of Worship in God’s Religion**

Some people stay awake on this night and some people distinguish this night by praying in it in a congregation and celebrating it through selected supplications and some even decorate their homes for this reason. The night of the middle of Sha’ban there is no sound Hadith which mentions congregating in Mosques and staying up etc. The Prophet did not do this nor did he specify anything in particular about this night- unlike the night of Decree (Laylat-ul-Qadr, the last ten nights in Ramadan, the first ten days of the month of Hajj, the day of Arafah etc.

The Prophet PBUH, his companions and those that followed them never did any of these things and as they are the proof for the one who wishes to follow the straight path – we see treat such actions as innovated matters. What is established regarding the virtues of this night are mentioned in the following saying of the Prophet PBUH:

**“whoever seeks to preserve his faith and his creed from associating partners with God – forgive what is between you and others of rancour and enmity”**

So join the ties and forgive those who have oppressed you and this is not on this night only but all year round.

It is therefore important that you try to do something good on this blessed night but to be cautious about the kind of celebrations and practices that go on. The Prophet pbuh said:

**“whoever brings something new into this matter of ours (i.e. the religion) is not from us and it will be rejected”**

i.e. falsehood is not accepted – but why? Inventions in worship are a source of harm because they allow things to enter the religion which do not belong to it and risk forcing out what is of the religion (in this case accounting yourself that you do not associate partners with God and forgiving others or removing rancour in your hearts against them). The origin of worship and belief depends upon the explanation of the way to God (Shariah) and the guidance of the Prophet PBUH. If we leave our religion to the whims of people, confusion will spread in the religion and it will differ incredibly to the reality of this pure heavenly faith.