

RAMADHAN -- VIRTUES OF FASTING



SERMON DELIVERED BY HADHRAT
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HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM
COMMUNITY



RELAYED LIVE ALL ACROSS THE
GLOBE

12 July, 2013

NOTE: Al Islam Team takes full responsibility for any errors or miscommunication in this Synopsis of the Friday Sermon

Summary

Fasting is a Divine Commandment; safeguarded in the Holy Quran

Fasting helps to attain and enhance Taqwa and gain Allah's pleasure

The Promised Messiah^{as} has explained the philosophy of fasting; the third pillar of Islam

To attain Taqwa by fasting is hard work and requires resolve

Fasting has many benefits

Funeral prayers of Irfana Shakoor Sahiba, Maleeha Anjum Sahiba and Maulwi Abdul Karim Sharma Sahib

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Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih recited the following verse of Surah

'O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous.' (2:184)

In the above verse God draws attention of true believers to the significance and obligation of fasting

Fasting is essential for progress of faith as well as for spiritual progress

May God out of His sheer grace enable us to attain this during this Ramadan

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**God has promised to safeguard the Quranic teachings
forever**

- During the month of Ramadan Muslim are commanded to fast in order to
 - Attain Taqwa
 - Enhance in Taqwa
 - Attain pleasure of God

**The Holy Qur'an enjoins fasting, makes clear
its objective and gives tiding of its reward.**

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The third pillar of Islam is fasting.
Fasting is not merely staying hungry and
thirsty; rather its reality and its impact can
only be gained through experience.

It is human nature that the less he eats
the more his self/spirit is purified and his
capacity for [spiritual] visions increases.
The will of God is to decrease one kind of
sustenance and to increase the other.

A person who is fasting should always be
mindful that he is not just required to stay
hungry. On the contrary he should remain
engaged in remembrance of God so that
he can cut asunder ties of worldly desires
and amusements and is wholly devoted
to God.'

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Hence, the significance of fasting is that man gives up one kind of sustenance which only nourishes the body and attains the other kind of sustenance which is a source of comfort and gratification of the soul.

Those who fast only for the sake of God ... , should remain engaged in Hamd (glorification of God), Tasbih (saying: SubhanAllah) and Tahleel (saying: La illaha illAllah) of Allah the Exalted, through which they will get the other sustenance.'

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The above extract espouses that staying hungry is not the objective of fasting, rather, it is attainment of Taqwa...



and if one fasts for the sake of God, one should spend time in God's remembrance.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that by starvation even hermits gain the capacity for visions, but the objective of the life of a believer is to cut ties with worldly matters and be devoted to God, for which remembrance of God is essential and Salat is the best way for this.

When fasting, apart from reduction in food intake, one also abstains from other permissible things and is more focussed about Salat and remembrance of God.

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When we say Alhamdulillah (All praise belongs to Allah), it should not be mere verbal profession.

- When we recite, we should be conscious that *Hamd* (praise of Allah) is the prerogative of the Great God alone.
- We praise that God guide us in this month so that we gain Taqwa through the beneficence of Hamd

Regarding this, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that when engaged in Hamd, one should be mindful that all honour is in God's hand

In this Ramadan we should pray that whatever the acts of virtues we do, may they give us nearness of God and may we not be drawn to worldly renown and display

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The Promised Messiah
(on whom be peace) said
that one should focus on
Tasbih
(saying SubhanAllah).

- However, it is not sufficient to simply utter SubhanAllah.
- When God's holiness is acknowledged one should be deeply moved to pray for oneself to be freed of all kind of foulness of the world.

The Promised
Messiah (on whom
be peace) enjoined
to say Tahleel
(saying: La illaha
illAllah)

- When one is in need of support, one should only seek God's support.
- Indeed, man is always in need of God's support, therefore effort should be made to always turn to the True Beloved.

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Hamd, Tasbih and Tahleel
all lead to the spiritual
conditions of

'Tabattalillah' which means
to inculcate perfectly
sincere connection with
God

Inqita', means to withdraw
oneself from all kinds of
worldly amusements and
be drawn to the worship of
God

This leads to attaining the objective of fasting,
that is, a person who fasts will attain Taqwa.

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To attain Taqwa during the month of Ramadan is a great objective and it requires hard work

It requires paying the full dues of worship of God as well as dues of mankind...

... because discharging both these dues in conjunction lead to Taqwa

People of other religions gave up their practices and the essence of fasting, as it was prescribed to them. Therefore, the objective of fasting that is to attain Taqwa and pleasure of God was lost.

If we reflect over this, we will find that this is also a kind of Shirk (associating partners with God) to give up one's practice of fasting for others

If we give preference to someone over God, we gradually diminish the Being of God and Shirk overtakes.

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Herein is a lesson for Muslims.

Those, who instead of understanding the spirit of fasting, aiming for Tabattal, engaging in Hamd and remembrance of God during fasting and observing one's Salat ...

... are simply proud of their fast, will have their fasts reduced to the fasts of people of earlier religions.

There are such Muslims, whose fasting, which is a worship, is not to seek the pleasure of God but is for pretence whereas God has stated that the objective of every worship should be Taqwa.

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If one wants
to be
rewarded for
piety and
fasting,



it cannot be
possible
without
Taqwa



and only God
decides who
has Taqwa
and who
does not

If a believer abides by this mind-set
and fasts to attain God's pleasure,
purification of spirit will take place



Such a person will be included
among those about whom the Holy
Prophet (pbuh) said that whoever
fasts during Ramadan in a state of
faith while self-examining...



.. will have his previous sins forgiven

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Our fast should be that fast which becomes a shield and saves us from every evil and opens up the door to every good.

Our nights should be adorned with optional worship of God

Indeed, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) laid great significance to optional worship during Ramadan and said that one who offers optional Salat during Ramadan has his sins forgiven

It is needed to make constant the special atmosphere of worship of God and sacrifices of Ramadan so that we may work our way towards those who are included among the righteous.

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One positive aspect of fasting which is now acknowledged by a section of scientists is that once a year diet-control is beneficial for human health.

When fasting is based on Taqwa it produces a beautiful society creating a spirit of sacrifice for each other.

The well offs develop a sense of empathy for their less fortunate brethren and help them; who in return develop gratitude towards their well-off brothers.

When fasting is for the sake of attainment of Taqwa, it inculcates the practice of bearing with hardship. Eating less at Sahoor and Iftar can lead to purification of self/spirit.

Fasting helps one to control one's emotions and avoid altercations, back-biting, falsehood and dishonesty

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It is needed that everyone self-examines and self-reflects in this month.

The positive practices of Ramadan should bring about a positive moral change in us

It is needed that this enhanced moral behaviour achieved during Ramadan is adapted as a way of life so that we may work our way towards those who are included among the righteous.

It is needed that we try our utmost to gain nearness to God during this Ramadan

It is God's favour on us that He opens the doors to Paradise and shuts the doors to Hell during this month. We should try through worship of God to attain purification of self/spirit and through paying the dues of mankind to enter the doors of Paradise which may stay open forever.

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We should repent
and engage in
Istaghfar (seeking
Divine
forgiveness)

we have to abide
by Taqwa and
raise the
standards of
offering our
obligatory and
optional Prayers
and pay attention
to paying the dues
of mankind.

May God out of
His sheer grace
enable us to attain
this during this
Ramadan.

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Next Hazrat Khalifatul Masih said that after Friday Prayers he would lead some funeral Prayers one of which was funeral Prayer in absentia.

Irfana Shakoor Sahiba passed away after brief illness on 9 July at the age of 62. She was a pious lady who was loved by everyone in her circle. She always counselled her family and friends to stay close to the Jama'at. She was a Moosia. She leaves behind her husband, three daughters and two sons.

Maleeha Anjum passed away on 9 July after a long illness. She was five years old. She was a Waqfe Nau child.

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Maulwi Abdul Karim Sharma Sahib passed away a few weeks ago.

He was born in 1918 and studied at Jamia Ahmadiyya Qadian. He dedicated his life at the age of 26. He served the Jama'at in numerous capacities. He served in Africa for 29 years and had been in the UK since 1978. He was a member of the Electoral College for Khilafat. He was a very pious, sincere person. He used to regularly come to see Huzoor when he could walk and was mobile. Later, when he was wheel-chair bound he offered Friday Prayer at Fazl Masjid and would always be present to greet Huzoor as Huzoor left for Baitul Futuh.

Love and affection exuded from his face. His grandson has said that Sharma Sahib had great regard and connection with Khilafat. May God elevate his station.

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