

RAMADAN MUBARAK

by Shaykh Taner Ansari

Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim, [In the Name of Allah, The One Who Acts with Mercy, The Source of Mercy]. All praise belongs to Allah. He owns everything. All power belongs to Him and not to us. May His peace and blessings be on His Prophet Muhammad and his family and on all the other prophets and their families.

SEEING ALLAH AND THE MOON

With our eyes our Prophet, pbuh, said in a *Qudsi Hadith* that you will see Allah in Paradise like the full moon, which occurs on the 14th day of the moon. The Sufi and Muslim poets always use the full moon as a metaphor which represents Allah. Abdul Qadir Geylani mentions this in his *Secret of Secrets (Sirr 'ul Asrar)*, translated in my book *Grand Masters of Sufism* (Ansari Publications, 2008). He says on that day there are faces that will glow. Actually this light is still going on. You will have to come to this understanding on your own. The moon on earth was Muhammad, pbuh, which means that Allah's light was coming out of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh. Think about this metaphor: Allah and the moon. What does the moon do? Does it have its own light? It reflects the sun. So what does the Prophet, pbuh, do? He reflects the light of the Creator, Allah's light.

SURATUL-NUR

In *Qur'an-i Karim* [Generous Qur'an, *Sura 24 Light*, *ayat 35-38*, it says:

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star. (This lamp is) kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guides unto His light whom He will. And Allah speaks to mankind in allegories, for Allah is Knower of all things:

(This lamp is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to make *zikr* and that His name shall be remembered (do *zikr*) therein. Therein do offer praise to Him at morn and evening

Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguiles from remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying to the poor their due; who fear a day when hearts and eyeballs will be overturned;

That Allah may reward them with the best of what they did, and increase reward for them of His bounty. Allah gives blessings without stint to who He will.

As you can see this light is found in the houses where Allah's name is mentioned, where *zikr* is performed. There are houses made of wood, stone, earth, and there are the "houses" made of flesh and bones. Your body is your house. Allah is mentioned automatically in your heart. The lamp in your body is in your heart. With your will, you can also mention Allah with your mouth, using your brain and your heart. When it is mentioned, where is the light? It is all around you. You are in the light and the light is within you.

Your body is in two parts: one is in your control and the other is not in your control. You are responsible for what is in your control. Allah says that we put the summary of what you are going to do on your neck. To what is He referring? *Zikr*. You keep saying *Hu Hu Hu*: Your heart is doing *zikr*, your blood, all your cells, all parts of you not in your control are doing *sema* [turning]. Allah is looking forward to seeing you doing *zikr* on your own with the part of you

that is in your control: with your mouth, with your hands, with your feet.

So looking at the Prophet, pbuh, you see Allah. The Prophet, pbuh, is not Allah, but the light emanating from the Prophet, pbuh, is Allah's light. Allah wants to increase His light within you, within your house, i.e., your body. Allah gave you means so that Allah's light can be increased in you. The foremost means is *tafakkur*, thinking and coming to an understanding. The second most important thing is *zikr*. The third most important thing is service for Allah. The fourth is the prescribed *ibada*: *salat*, *zakat*, fasting. *Salat* is prescribed. You must do it five times a day, if not, then three times a day, if not, then at least two times a day, in the morning and in the evening. This is *fardz*, you have to do it. However, when you are attaining Allah's love, there are other important things, like *tafakkur*. In *Secret of Secrets*, Abdul Qadir Geylani refers to a *Qudsi Hadith*: One moment of contemplation is better than a thousand years of *ibada* without contemplation.

THE TURKISH CALENDAR

We follow the Turkish calendar. The Turks have an accurate way of detecting the moon through their observatory, so that they know exactly when the moon will be in its place, without trying to spot it with the naked eye, whether there are clouds or not. Since we have the technology, we should use it because we can trust it. You will be informed of the beginning and end of Ramadan through this means.

FASTING IN RAMADAN

Allah said, "When you fast, you are closest to Me." Allah doesn't eat. You don't eat. When you fast, what are you doing? You're fighting against your biggest motives, like hunger, sex, domination, self-preservation. If you can master over these things at will, then you will have a good tool against your *nafs*. Your *nafs* uses all these things to attract attention to itself and dominate you. If you can, please fast the whole month of Ramadan. If you can't fast the whole month, then fast as much as you can. If you can't fast, then diet, minimize your food intake. If you are unable to fast, you must pay something to feed the poor, enough to sustain a person in one day. In the United States, we pay between \$3 to \$5 per day. Pay what you can. If you are sick or traveling, do not fast. Don't be a hero and try to fast during these times. Allah is not looking for heroes. Allah is looking for people in order to allow His light to shine through them. When you are a hero, you are with you. Allah is looking for people who want to surrender and let Allah be there. If you are menstruating or nursing, you don't have to fast.

In *Sura 24, ayat 38* above, Allah says that he is going to look at the best of what you did and reward you. In Ramadan, the most important thing, is to control your *nafs*. When you are hungry, your patience diminishes. Since you are trying to be a Sufi, you have to practice your patience when you are hungry. You have to manifest peace when you are hungry. Hold on to your anger when you are hungry. Be good to people, speak less, avoid confrontation. If somebody bothers you while you are fasting, tell them you are fasting and turn away. The purpose of the fasting is to give you an excuse to get closer to Allah and to be thankful. When you take food and water away temporarily, you appreciate it much more. Allah is *Razzaq*. He nourishes us spiritually and materially.

ZAKAT IN RAMADAN

Pay the poor due, *zakat*, *zakat'el fitr* which is 1/40th of your income which you have in excess, that which you did not spend. You can pay *tariqa* and pay your tithe as well. We thank those who

are paying their tithing, and to the others who are not, please do it.

BREAKING THE FAST

Break fast with water and dates, then pray. Then eat the meal or try the Pakistani way. First start with appetizers and one or two hours later eat the meal. (If you are living in countries closer to the poles where the light is extra long, you may fast by the hour: summer 12 hours, winter 8 hours.)

SAHUR

These are suggestions. It is good to get up and eat a light breakfast. Don't go to bed after, but keep reciting *Suratul-Ikhlās* until the morning prayer. Do the morning prayer, then go back to bed if you can.

THE NIGHT OF POWER

The assumed night of power is the 27th of Ramadan, but it is not the same day every year. The suggested Night of Power is one of the last 10 days of Ramadan and on one of the odd days. We will tell you as soon as we know. In case some of you receive the information after the Night of Power because of the time difference in the different countries, then celebrate each of the suggested nights as the Night of Power.

NEW STUDENTS

Go for it! Experience Ramadan and find out what happens.

Ramadan Mubarak!

Call of the Divine

Summer 2009

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Publisher: Ansari Publications

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