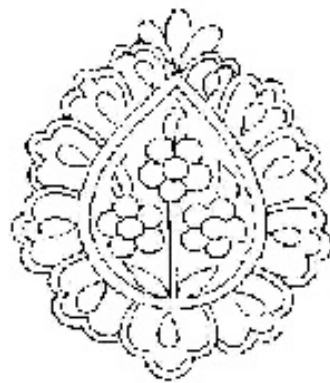


Fadā'il OF Ramadān

(Revised and Improved Translation)
OF
Urdu Book :- *Fadā'il-e-Ramadān*



by

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Introduction

All praise is for Allah and blessings be upon His chosen *rasūl* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}. In the following pages, I have quoted a few *'ahādīth* with reference to the blessed month of Ramaḍān. The *nabī* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} has urged us in these *'ahādīth* to reform ourselves by earning the great virtues and blessings of this month. But our carelessness these days has become so great that we neither act upon his advice nor pay any attention to it, so much so, that very few of us even know about the benefit we can obtain therefrom.

My object in collecting these *'ahādīth* in this book is to encourage the *imāms* of *masjids*, leaders of *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh* and other well-read Muslims, who have the interest of our *dīn* at heart, to read out and explain this book in the various *masjids* during the first few days of Ramaḍān (or before) so that, through Allah's great *rahmah* and the blessings of the words of His most Beloved *nabī*, we may get a proper respect for Ramaḍān and its blessings.

This can lead us towards acting on His commandments and keep us away from evil deeds. *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} has said: "Should Allah guide one person to the right path through you, that shall be better for you than red camels (something that is considered a most precious possession)."

Ramaḍān is for the Muslims a very great favour from Allah. This favour can only be considered as such if we properly appreciate it, otherwise Ramaḍān will come and go without our gaining anything. It is stated in a Ḥadīth, "If my *ummah* would realise what Ramaḍān really is, they would wish that the whole year round should be Ramaḍān."

Such is the value of this month of fasting. In another Ḥadīth we are told: "The fasting of Ramaḍān and fasting three days of every month keeps evil thoughts away from the heart and purifies it." The *ṣahābah* ^{radīyallāhu 'anhum} (companions) used to fast even during *jihād* on difficult, tiresome journeys, in spite of having been given permission by *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} to break their fast. In the end, *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} had to prohibit them from such fasting.

In a Ḥadīth from the **Ṣahīh** of Muslim (a compilation), it is reported that the *ṣahābah* once stopped for rest on a journey for *jihād*. It was extremely hot and, due to poverty, they did not even have sufficient cloth to protect themselves against the sun's rays.

In this condition, many of them used their hands for protection

against the sun's heat. Many were fasting and were so overcome with weakness that they could not stand up to the excessive heat and fell down. Some of the *ṣahābah* fasted throughout the year.

There are numerous *'ahādīth* in which various blessings of Ramaḍān are explained. It is not possible for me to collect them all here, and if I were to enumerate and explain them in detail, the readers may become bored in as much as lack of interest is being shown these days increasingly in the matters of *dīn*, both for its knowledge and practice.

I have therefore mentioned only twenty-one *'ahādīth* in this book and have divided them in three chapters, namely: Chapter 1 on *faḍā'il* of Ramaḍān (10 *'ahādīth*), Chapter 2 on *laylatal qadr* (7 *'ahādīth*), Chapter 3, on *ī'tikāf* (3 *'ahādīth*).

At the end, by way of completing this book, I have included one long Ḥadīth. May Allah accept this work through His Grace and the blessings of His Beloved *rasūl*, Muḥammad ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, and grant that I and all Muslims benefit from it. *āmin*.

Muḥammad Zakariyya Kandhlawī

Chapter 1. The *Faḍā'il* of Ramaḍān

Hadith 1. *Rasūlullāh's* Talk on the Last Day of *Shah bān*

Salmān reports: "On the last day of *shah bān* the *rasūl* of Allah ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam addressed us and said: 'O people, there comes upon you now a great month, a most blessed month, in which lies a night better than one thousand months. It is a month in which Allah has made it compulsory that fasting should be observed by day; and He has made the *tarāwīḥ* by night a *sunnah*.'

"Who so ever tries drawing nearer to Allah by performing any non-obligatory deed in this month, for him shall be such a

عَنْ سَلْمَانَ قَالَ خَطَبَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي آخِرِ يَوْمٍ مِنْ شَعْبَانَ فَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ أَظْلَكُكُمْ شَهْرٌ عَظِيمٌ مُبَارَكٌ شَهْرٌ فِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ شَهْرٌ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ صِيَامَهُ فَرِيضَةً وَ قِيَامَ لَيْلِهِ تَطَوُّعًا مَنْ تَقَرَّبَ فِيهِ بِمَخْصَلَةٍ كَانَ كَمَنْ أَدَّى فَرِيضَةً فِي مَا سِوَاهُ وَ مَنْ أَدَّى فَرِيضَةً فِيهِ كَانَ كَمَنْ أَدَّى سَبْعِينَ فَرِيضَةً فِيمَا سِوَاهُ وَ هُوَ شَهْرُ الصَّبْرِ وَ الصَّبْرِ ثَوَابُهُ الْجَنَّةُ وَ شَهْرُ الْمَوَاسَاةِ وَ شَهْرٌ يُزَادُ فِي رِزْقِ الْمُؤْمِنِ فِيهِ مَنْ فَطَّرَ فِيهِ صَائِمًا كَانَ مَغْفِرَةً لِدُنُوبِهِ وَ عِتْقَ رَقَبَتِهِ

reward as if he had performed a *fard* (obligatory observance) in any other time of the year. And whosoever performs a *fard* for him shall be the reward of seventy *fard* in any other time of the year.' ”

“This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for true patience is *jannah*(paradise). It is the month of kindness for one's fellow men. It is the month wherein a true believer's *rizq* (sustenance) is increased. Whosoever feeds a fasting person in order to break the fast (at sunset), for him there shall be forgiveness of his sins and freedom from the fire of *jahannam* (Hell), and for him shall be the same reward as for him (whom he fed), without that person's reward being decreased in the least.' ”

“Thereupon we said: ‘O *rasūl* of Allah ^{sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam}, not all of us possess the means whereby we can provide enough for a fasting person to break his fast.’ The *rasūl* of Allah replied: ‘Allah grants this same reward to him who gives a fasting person a single date or a drink of water or a sip of milk to break the fast. This is a month the first part of which brings Allah's *rahmah* (mercy),

مِن النَّارِ وَ كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يُتَّقَصَّ مِنْ أَجْرِهِ شَيْءٌ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَيْسَ كُلُّنَا يَجِدُ مَا يَقْطُرُ الصَّائِمُ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُعْطِي اللَّهُ هَذَا الثَّوَابَ مَنْ قَطَرَ صَائِمًا عَلَى تَمْرَةٍ أَوْ شَرِبَ مَاءً أَوْ مُدَقَّةَ لَبَنٍ وَ هُوَ شَهْرٌ أَوَّلُهُ رَحْمَةٌ وَ أَوْسَطُهُ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَ آخِرُهُ عِتْقٌ مِنَ النَّارِ مَنْ خَفَّفَ عَنِ مَمْلُوكِهِ فِيهِ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ وَ أَعْتَقَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ وَ اسْتَكْتَرُوا فِيهِ مِنْ أَرْبَعِ خِصَالٍ خَصَلْتَيْنِ تُرْضَوْنَ بِهِمَا رَبُّكُمْ وَ خَصَلْتَيْنِ لَا غِنَاءَ بِكُمْ عَنْهُمَا فَأَمَّا الْخِصْلَتَانِ الثَّانِيَتَانِ تُرْضَوْنَ بِهِمَا رَبُّكُمْ فَشَهَادَةُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَ تَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُ وَ أَمَّا الْخِصْلَتَانِ الثَّلَاثَتَانِ لَا غِنَاءَ بِكُمْ عَنْهُمَا فَتَسْأَلُونَ اللَّهَ الْجَنَّةَ وَ تُعَوِّدُونَ بِهِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَ مَنْ سَقَى صَائِمًا سَقَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَوْضِي شَرْبَةً لَا يَطْمَأُ حَتَّى يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ

رواه ابن خزيمة في صحيحه و قال إن صح الخبر و رواه البيهقي و رواه أبو الشيخ ابن حبان في الثواب باختصار عنهما و في أسانيدهم علي ابن زيد ابن جدهان و رواه ابن خزيمة أيضا و البيهقي باختصار عنه من حديث أبي هريرة و في إسناده كثير ابن زيد كذا في الترغيب قلت علي ابن زيد ضعفه جماعة و قال الترمذي صدوق و صح له حديثا في السلام و حسن له غير ما حديث و كذا كثير ضعفه النسائي و غيره و قال ابن معين ثقة و قال ابن عدي لم أر بحديثه بأسا و أخرج بحديثه بن خزيمة في صحيحه كذا في

the middle of which brings His forgiveness and the last part of

رجال المنذري ص ٤٠٧ لكن قال العيني الخبر منكر

تأمل

which brings freedom from the fire of *jahannam* (hell).’ ”

“ ‘Whosoever lessens the burden of his servants (bondsmen) in this month, Allah will forgive him and free him from the fire of *jahannam*. And in this month, four things you should try to perform in great number, two of which shall be to please your Allah, while the other two shall be those without which you cannot manage.’ ”

“ ‘Those which shall be to please your Allah, are that you should in great quantity recite *al-kalimah al-tayyibah: lā 'ilāha 'illal-lāh* and make much *istighfār* (beg Allah's forgiveness with *astagh firullāh*). And as for those two without which you cannot manage, you should beg Allah for entry into *jannah* and seek His protection from the fire of *jahannam*. And whosoever gave a person who fasted, water to drink, Allah shall grant him a drink from my fountain, such a drink whereafter he shall never again feel thirsty until he enters *jannah*.’ ”

Note: All the points to which this Ḥadīth draws attention have been further emphasized in numerous other *'aḥādīth* on the great virtues of Ramaḍān. Quite a number of important points are brought to our notice in this Ḥadīth.

First it should be noted that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} delivered this sermon at the end of the month of *sha' bān*, the obvious reason being that he intended to put into our minds the great importance of (the forthcoming) Ramaḍān, so that we, on our side, could remember and not allow even a moment to go by without giving it the true importance it deserves.

After describing the virtues of this month, attention is specifically drawn to several important items. First the *laylatal qadr*, which is indeed a most valuable night. Thereafter, it is brought out in the above Ḥadīth that fasting during day has been made obligatory by Allah, Who also made the *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh* during night a *sunnah* to please Allah.

From this Ḥadīth it is noted that the command for *tarāwīḥ* prayers too comes from Allah Himself, and the other *'aḥādīth* from *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} are really to reinforce this. All the *imāms* are agreed on *tarāwīḥ* being a *sunnah*.’ Maulana Shah ^{Abd al-Ḥaq al-}

Dihlawi wrote in his book **Mā Thabata bi-l-Sunnah** that should the people of any town given up *tarāwīḥ* prayers, the Muslim ruler should compel them to do so by force.

Here, one point should be noted. Many are of the opinion that one may merely listen to the full Qur'ān being recited during *tarāwīḥ* in eight or ten days in a certain *masjid*, whereby the virtue of the *sunnah* shall have been obtained.

This is wrong because there are two distinct things. First, it is *sunnah* to hear the full Qur'ān being recited in *tarāwīḥ* during Ramaḍān. Secondly, it is *sunnah* to perform *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh* throughout Ramaḍān. Both these should be performed with due care.

As for those who are on a journey and unable to perform both *sunnahs* because of not knowing where they might be (at different places); for them it is advisable that in the first few days of Ramaḍān they should have the full Qur'ān recited in *tarāwīḥ*, so that it does not remain incomplete. Then they should join *tarāwīḥ* wherever they find the opportunity.

Another point that is brought to our notice in the above Ḥadīth is that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} informed us that any *nafl* (non-obligatory) act in Ramaḍān is rewarded as much as a *fard* (obligatory) in normal times, whereas a *fard* in Ramaḍān carries the reward of seventy *farā'id* of other times.

At this point, we should consider our *ibādah* as to how much importance we attach to obligatory practices in Ramaḍān and how much *nafl* we perform? As for care in carrying out *fard* we find numerous people who, after having eaten *suhūr* (food before dawn), go back to bed, with the result that *fajr ṣalāh* is not performed. Many perform it, but not with *jamā'ah*.

This creates the impression that we give thanks to Allah for the food we had eaten at *suhūr* by either not performing the most important *fard*, or by performing it without *jamā'ah* (congregation)! *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said that there is no *ṣalāh* for those living near a *masjid* except in the mosque.

In the book **Mazāhir-e Ḥaq** we find that when a person, without any valid excuse, performs *ṣalāh* without *jamā'ah* (congregation) the *fard* is taken as performed, but the full reward for the *ṣalāh* is not received. Similarly, in numerous cases at the *iftār* (breaking the fast) the *maghrib ṣalāh* is missed, and many who do

come to the mosque miss the *takbīrat al-tahrīm* at the beginning or even miss the first *rak'ah*.

Many people, because of the long *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh*, even perform *ishā ṣalāh* before its proper time! That is the sad way we look after our *ṣalāh* in Ramaḍān! In order to perform one *fard*, three are neglected. How often do we see even *zuhr ṣalāh* being ignored because we are asleep (in siesta), while *asr* is missed because we are too busy in buying, selling and cooking in preparation for *iftār*.

If such is the case with the *farā'id*, then we can imagine how much less importance is given to the *nafl* observances. One finds that because of sleep, the time of the *nawāfil* soon after *shurūq* (after sunrise) and *ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā* (before noon) go by unattended.

Then look at *ṣalāt al-awwābīn* (just after *maghrib*). Here we find ourselves busy with *iftār* and frightened by the thought of *tarāwīḥ* after an hour, so this *ṣalāh* too is ignored.

Further we find that for *ṣalāt al-tahajjud* the time is the same as that for *suhūr*, with the result that this too is neglected. One may make a thousand excuses for not finding time for these *nawāfil*, yet we see that there are many who do find the time to perform all these *ibādah* during these precious days.

I personally observed my teacher Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad during many Ramaḍāns. He was a very weak person of great age but, in spite of that, he used to recite one and a quarter *juz'* (part of the Qur'ān) in *nafl namāz* after *maghrib*. Thereafter, he used to spend about half an hour in eating and other necessities in preparation for *tarāwīḥ*.

He used to stand in *tarāwīḥ* for about two and a half hours in India and for three hours while residing in Madinah *al-munawwarah*. Thereafter, he would sleep for two or three hours (according to the season). Then again he used to recite the Qur'ān in *tahajjud*, until half an hour before *fajr*, when he ate his *suhūr*.

From then until *fajr* he remained busy with reading the Qur'ān or reciting his *wazīfahs*. With the break of dawn, he performed *fajr ṣalāh*, whereafter he remained in meditation *murāqabah* until the *nawāfil* soon after *shurūq*. Having performed *ishrāq* prayers, he used to write a part of his famous commentary **Badhl al-Majhūd**, in Arabic on the **Sunan** of Abū Dāwūd until midday; then he normally attended to his letters and dictated replies.

He then rested until *zuhr* prayers and read the Qur'ān from

zuhr to *ʿaṣr*. From *ʿaṣr* until *maghrib* he would be busy with *tasbīḥ* and in conversation with those who visited him. When he had completed **Badhl al-Majhūd** he used to be busy studying some religious works.

This was his daily programme throughout the year. In Ramaḍān, however, he used to spend a bit more time in his *ʿibādah*, making the *rakaʿāt* longer. Our other religious divines used to take the same care of Ramaḍān, and even more, so that it is not easy to copy them.

Shaykh al-Hind Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan ^{rahmatullāh 'alayh} used to remain in *nafl ṣalāh* from after *tarāwīḥ* until *fajr* and would listen to the Qur'ān recited by several *ḥuffāẓ* one after the other.

Mawlānā Shāh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Raipūrī remained busy with *tilāwah* (recitation) of the Qur'ān day and night throughout Ramaḍān. There was no time left for attending to correspondence or meeting visitors. Only his very special intimates were allowed to visit him after *tarāwīḥ* for a short period, while he took a cup of tea.

The reason for mentioning the manner in which these elders spent their Ramaḍān is not that we may just read them casually, but rather with the object that we may take courage and, to the best of our ability, endeavour to follow their noble examples.

How wonderful would it be if those who are not pressed by worldly necessities would try their utmost to mend their religious life in this one month, after having wasted eleven months of the year. As for those who have to be in their offices and at work by eight, nine or ten in the morning, they should not find it difficult, at least in Ramaḍān to spend the time from *fajr* until their duty hour in reciting the Qur'ān.

After all, for our worldly needs we do find time, in spite of the office hours. As for those engaged in farming, who normally are in no one's service, nothing should prevent them from reciting the Qur'ān while at work in their farm.

Then look at the businessmen, shopkeepers and merchants. Nothing should prevent them in Ramaḍān from reciting the Qur'ān during their business hours, or cutting short the trading time in order to make time for the recitation thereof.

After all, there is a very great link between Ramaḍān and *tilāwah* of the Qur'ān. Almost all of Allah's (Divine) Scriptures

were revealed in this month. Similarly in this month, the Qur'ān was brought down from *al-lawḥ al-mahfūz* (the Protected Divine Tablet) to the *samā al-dunyā* (lowest Heavens or sky above the Earth), from where it was revealed bit by bit to *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} over a span of twenty three years.

The *nabī* Ibrahim ^{'alayhi ṣallam} was given his scriptures on the first or third of this month, and Dawūd ^{'alayhi ṣallam} received the Psalms on the twelfth or eighteenth of this month. The *nabī* Mūsā ^{'alayhi ṣallam} received the Torah on the sixth; Eesa (the Prophet Jesus) ^{'alayhi ṣallam} received the *injīl* (the Gospel) on the twelfth or thirteenth.

From this, we note the close connection between the Divine Scriptures and the month of Ramaḍān. For this reason, as much *tilāwah* of the Qur'ān should be done as possible during this month. Such was the habit of our *mashāyikh*.

Jibra'il ^{'alayhi ṣallam} used to recite the whole Qur'ān to our *nabī* Muḥammad ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} in the month of Ramaḍān. In some *'ahādīth*, it is stated that *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} used to recite and Jibra'il ^{'alayhi ṣallam} used to listen. By combining these reports, the *ulamā* have said that it is *mustaḥabb* to read the Qur'ān in such a manner that while one person recites, the others listen. Thereafter another person recites while the others listen.

So recite the Qur'ān as much as possible; whatever time remains thereafter should also not be wasted. *Rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} has drawn our attention to four other things and advised that we should practise them as much as possible: These are the recitation of *al-kalimah al-tayyibah*, *istighfār*, begging for entry into *jannah* and seeking refuge from *jahannam*. Therefore any spare time available should be spent on these. What is so difficult about keeping the tongue busy with the recitation of *ṣalāh 'alan nabiy* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} or *lā 'ilāha 'illal-lāh* while engaged in our daily tasks?

In the same Ḥadīth; *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} has said a few more things: Ramaḍān is the month of patience. Hence, even if great difficulty is experienced in fasting, one should bear it cheerfully with patience; one should not complain, as people often do during the hot summer days.

Similarly, if *suhūr* is missed, one should not complain. Should we feel tired at the time of *tarāwīḥ*, this too should be borne with patience. Do not consider it a great hardship or trial; otherwise these performances may lose credit with Allah. When we turn our

back on worldly comforts, forsake our eating and drinking for the sake of livelihood, then to seek Allah's pleasure, we should not mind our difficulties?

Further, the Ḥadīth states that this is the month of kindness, especially with the poor and needy. Kindness should be of a practical nature. When ten things are placed before us for *iftār*, at least three or four of them should be set aside for the poor and needy, even if we cannot treat them as generously as ourselves.

In showing kindness for the poor, as in all other matters, the *ṣaḥābah* were living examples, and in this respect, it is our duty to follow or at least try to follow them. There are hundreds and thousands of incidents that leave us astonished.

Look at the following example: Abu Jahm relates that during the battle of Yarmūk he went in search of his cousin, taking with him a goat's skin full of water, so as to give him a drink and wash his wounds if he were alive and wounded.

He found him lying among the wounded. "When I asked him whether he wanted some water, he indicated 'Yes.' At that moment, someone near him gave a cry of pain. My cousin pointed there, indicating that I should first quench the thirst of the neighbour."

"I went to him and found that he too needed water, but, just as I was about to give it to him, a third person gave a cry of pain near him. The second one pointed to this third one, meaning that I should give the third one a drink first."

"I went to the third man, but before he could drink he passed away, whereupon I returned to the second one, only to find that he too had passed away. When I returned to my cousin, he too had become a *shahīd*." This is the spirit of sacrifice that our forefathers possessed. May Allah be pleased with them and grant us the ability to follow in their footsteps.

Ibn 'Umar has reported a statement of the *nabī* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}, who said that there are at all times five hundred chosen persons who enjoy Allah's favour, as well as forty *abdāls* (great *mashāyikh*). When any one of them dies, another takes his place. The *ṣaḥābah* asked about their peculiar virtuous deeds; *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said, "They forgive the oppressor, show kindness to those who harm them and, out of their love for the common man, share their provisions with the needy."

In another Ḥadīth, it is stated that whosoever feeds the hungry,

clothes the naked, and grants refuge to the traveller, surely Allah shall save him from the fear of the day of *qiyāmah*. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī used to give Sufyān al-Thawri one thousand *dirhams* every month, whereupon Sufyān used to prostrate himself before Allah, praying, "O Allah, Yaḥyā has provided sufficiently for my worldly needs; You, through Your Great *rahmah*, see to his necessities in the *ākhirah*." After the death of Yaḥyā, some people saw him in their dreams and on inquiring what had happened to him in the court of Allah, he replied: "Through the prayers of Sufyān, I have been forgiven by Allah."

Further, *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallīllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} has mentioned the virtue of feeding a fasting person at the time of breaking the fast. In one Ḥadīth, it is reported that the *malā'ikah* send blessings during the nights of Ramaḍān upon any one who feeds a fasting person (to break the fast) out of his *ḥalāl* earnings and, on the night of *laylatal qadr* Jibra'il ^{ʿalayhi s̄lām} shakes hands with him. The sign of this is that his heart becomes soft, while tears flow freely from his eyes.

Ḥammād ibn Salamah, a very famous *muḥaddith* used to feed fifty people every day in Ramaḍān at *iftār* (**Ruḥ al-Bayān**). In the later portion of the Ḥadīth, *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallīllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} termed the first part of Ramaḍān as the period of *rahmah*, whereby it is meant that Allah's *rahmah* is showered on the believers. Those who express their gratitude to Allah for His bounties, receive them in larger measure. The Qur'ān says: "If you are thankful, I will surely grant you more."

The middle part of Ramaḍān is the period when forgiveness is granted to the believers as a reward for the fasting during the first part. The last part of Ramaḍān brings freedom from *jahannam*. This is confirmed by many similar *'aḥādīth*.

In my personal opinion, Ramaḍān has been here divided into three parts because people are normally of three different kinds. First, there are those who have no burden of sins. For them, during the very beginning of Ramaḍān, Allah's *rahmah* and bounties will descend. Secondly, there are those whose burden of sins is not too heavy; they receive forgiveness after they have fasted for one third of Ramaḍān. Thirdly, there are the greatest sinners. For them forgiveness comes only after having fasted the major portion of Ramaḍān.

As for those who received Allah's *rahmah* right at the begin-

ning, having no sins to be forgiven, they indeed will be blessed with heaps of *rahmah*. And Allah knows best.

Another point mentioned in the Ḥadīth is that masters should be lenient with their servants in Ramaḍān because, after all, they too are fasting. Too much of hard work will be an unbearable burden to them. So why not hire an extra worker for the additional work?

That of course only applies when the servant himself fasts, otherwise there is no difference for him between Ramaḍān and any other month. It is height of cruelty if some masters, while not fasting themselves, prove unkind masters for their fasting employees.

Lastly, in the Ḥadīth, *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa 'ālihim} exhorted the *ṣaḥābah* that four things should be repeated constantly. First, the recitation of *al-kalimah al-ṭayyibah* which in the *'aḥādīth* is called the best form of *dhikr*. In *al-Mishkāh*, Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī reports: "Once *nabī* Mūsā ^{'alayhi} begged of Allah to grant him a special *du'ā*, by which he might remember Allah and also ask favours of Him." Thereupon Allah asked him to recite this *kalimah*: *lā 'ilāha 'illal-lāh*.

The *nabī* Mūsā said: "O Allah, this is a verse recited by all Your servants. I desired a special one." Allah replied: "O Mūsā, if the seven heavens, the earth and all its occupants, except Myself, are placed in one pan of a scale and this *kalimah* on the other, the *kalimah* will outweigh everything."

In another Ḥadīth it is stated: "Should anyone sincerely recite this *kalimah*, the doors of *jannah* open up for him immediately and nothing can stop him from reaching Allah's Throne." The only condition is that the reciter should refrain from major sins.

Allah out of His Infinite *rahmah* (mercy) provides in great abundance any thing that is needed by all. We find this law working over the world when we examine our basic worldly requirements, e.g. water, needed by all, is freely available. Similarly the *kalimah*, the highest form of *dhikr*, is available for every one to recite and enjoy its benefits.

The second item mentioned in the above Ḥadīth for profuse recitation is *istighār* (asking for Allah's forgiveness). Several *'aḥādīth* report the virtue of *istighār*. In one Ḥadīth we read: "Whoever says a great deal of *istighār*," Allah opens a way out for him from all difficulties and relieves him from sorrows.

In a similar manner, he receives his provisions "from unexpected sources." In another Ḥadīth, *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa 'ālihim} said, "Every

man is a sinner, but the best of the sinners are those who repent and seek forgiveness."

When a man commits a sin, a black spot settles on his heart, but when he repents, it is washed away; otherwise the black spot remains permanently. In the same Ḥadīth, the *nabī* ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam has advised us to pray for *jannah* and protection from *jahannam*.

Hadith 2. Five Ramaḍān Gifts to this *Ummah*

Abu Hurayrah relates that *rasūl-ullāh* ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "My *ummah* has been given five special things that were not given to anyone before them. The smell from the mouth of a fasting Muslim is sweeter for Allah than the pleasant smell of musk. The fish in the sea seek forgiveness on their behalf until they break their fast. Allah prepares and decorates His special *jannah* every day and then says (to it): 'The time is near when My faithful servants shall put away the load (of the world) and come to you.' In this month, the rebellious *shayāṭīn* (satans) are chained, so as not to cause those evils which they normally do during months other than Ramaḍān. On the last night of Ramaḍān, the fasting Muslims are forgiven." The *ṣaḥābah* thereupon inquired: "O *rasūl* of Allah, is that night *laylat al-qadr*?" *Rasūlullāh* ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam replied: "No. But it is only right that a servant should be given his reward on having completed his duty."

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أُعْطِيَتْ أُمَّتِي خَمْسَ خِصَالٍ
فِي رَمَضَانَ لَمْ تُعْطَهُنَّ أُمَّةٌ قَبْلَهُمْ خُلُوفٌ فَمِ
الصَّائِمِ أَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ رِيحِ الْمِسْكِ وَ
تَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُمُ الْحَيْتَانُ حَتَّى يُفْطِرُوا وَ يُزَيَّرُنَّ
اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ جَنَّتُهُ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ
يُوشِكُ عِبَادِي الصَّالِحُونَ أَنْ يُلْقُوا عَنْهُمْ
الْمَوْئِنَةَ وَيَصِيدُوا إِلَيْكَ وَ تُصَفَّدُ فِيهِ مَرْدَةُ
الشَّيَاطِينِ فَلَا يَخْتَلِصُونَ إِلَى مَا كَانُوا
يَخْتَلِصُونَ إِلَيْهِ فِي غَيْرِهِ وَ يُغْفَرُ فِي آخِرِ لَيْلِهِ
قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَهِيَ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ قَالَ لَا وَ
لَكِنَّ الْعَامِلَ إِتْمَانًا يُؤْتَى أَجْرُهُ إِذَا قَضَى عَمَلَهُ
رواه أحمد و البزار و رواه أبو الشيخ ابن حبان في
كتاب الثواب إلا أن عنده و تستغفر لهم الملائكة بدل
الحيثان كذا في الترغيب

Note: *Rasūlullāh* ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam mentions in this Ḥadīth five such gifts from Allah, which were not granted to the (fasting) people before Islam. If only we could truly appreciate how great this bounty from Allah really is, we would sincerely try to gain those special favours.

First, we are told that the smell from the mouth of the fasting person is more likeable for Allah than the smell of musk. Commentators mention eight possible meanings of this. Of these, three are the most acceptable explanations: (a) Some are of the opinion that, in the *ākhirah*, Allah shall reward that smell from the mouth with pleasing odour more sweet and refreshing than musk (**al-Durr al-Manthūr**). (b) On the day of *qiyāmah* when we shall rise from the grave, a sweet smell shall come from the mouths of those who fasted and that shall be better than musk. (c) The interpretation that is the most acceptable in my opinion, is the view that in this very world the smell is more pleasing for Allah than musk. This shows the ties of love between Allah and His fasting slaves.

We all know that even a disagreeable smell from a person whom one loves truly and sincerely is in itself attractive to the lover, who in this case is Allah Himself. What is indicated is the closeness to Allah of the fasting person.

Fasting is one of the most appreciated forms of *ibādah* (worship) in Allah's sight and for this reason a Ḥadīth states that the reward for every deed is brought by the *malā'ikah*, but Allah says: "The reward for fasting, I Myself will give, because it is for Me alone." Another version of the same Ḥadīth (when read in a different way) says: "I Myself become his reward." And what greater reward can there be for the lover than to meet the Beloved?

In another Ḥadīth, we read: "Fasting is the door to all other forms of *ibādah*," This means that through fasting the heart becomes enlightened and, through this, the desire for other forms of worship is induced. This is the case only if the fast is really so, with all its requirements (as shall be explained later), and is not merely remaining hungry and thirsty.

At this juncture, I wish to draw attention to a particular point. Because of this Ḥadīth, some *imāms* (especially Imam Shafi'ī) prohibited cleaning of teeth with *miswāk* in the afternoon, whereas the *ḥanafīs* consider it to be *mustaḥabb* (preferable) at all times.

The Imam's argument is that through *miswāk* the smell from the teeth is removed, whereas *ḥanafīs* maintain that the odour referred to here is the smell resulting from the stomach being empty, having nothing to do with the teeth.

The second special favour is that the fish in the sea say *istighār* (seek forgiveness) for him who fasts. The purpose here is to explain

that many living beings offer prayers on his behalf. My uncle, Mawlānā Muḥammad Ilyas ^{rahmatullah} used to say that this is apparently so because Allah says in the Qur'ān: "Certainly those who believe and do righteous deeds, Allah shall make them beloved (in this world)."

One Ḥadīth clarifies this further: "When Allah loves a person, He says to Jibra'īl, "I love that person, so you should also love him." Jibra'īl then also loves that person and announces in the heavens: "That person is loved by Allah; you all should also love him." Thereupon all the inmates of the heavens begin to love him.

Then, love for that person spreads all over the Earth. Normally only those who are near to a person seem to love him, but here that love spreads all over; even the animals in the jungles and the fish in the sea do the same. They all then pray in his behalf.

The third favour bestowed on the fasting persons is that *jannah* is decorated for them. The Ḥadīth states that at the beginning of every year, *jannah* begins to be decorated for Ramaḍān. We know that when an important person is expected to arrive, great care is taken in the preparations for his welcome. For a marriage, for example, preparations commence months in advance. Likewise it is with Ramaḍān.

The fourth favour is that rebellious *shayāṭīn* (devils) are chained, as a result of which evil is cut down. One would have expected that, because of the great desire for *ibādah* (worship) in the blessed month of Ramaḍān, the *shayāṭīn* would try just as hard to pull the faithful away from the right path, so that much more evil would be committed. That is not the case.

On the contrary, we see so much less evil. How many drunkards do we not see who, just because of the blessed month of Ramaḍān, do not drink any wine? How many other evildoers do we not see giving up evil acts during the blessed month of Ramaḍān?

A question may arise here that, when the *shayāṭīn* are chained, how is it that we still do see evil committed, even though to a lesser degree? The reply is that all evil may not necessarily be caused by the rebellious *shayāṭīn*. Having for eleven months lived in obedience to *shayāṭīn's* evil designs and wishes, the performance of evil deeds caused by them becomes second nature, and so evil is being done in and out of Ramaḍān.

For this reason, we find those who normally commit evil

continue to commit some of it in Ramaḍān. Thus, even though 'shayāṭīn' have been chained, their influence on us has become so strong that we follow their path of our own accord.

Another important point is: the *nabī*^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} has said, "When a person commits a sin, a black spot forms on his heart; when he sincerely repents, it is removed otherwise it remains. When he again commits a sin another spot forms (and so on), until his heart becomes completely black. Then nothing good can enter his heart."

Referring to this, Allah says in the Qur'ān: "By no means! But on their hearts is the stain (of Evil)." Thus their hearts become totally stained; in such cases, these hearts have a natural inclination towards those sins. This is the reason why many people fearlessly commit one type of sin, but considering another sin of similar degree, then their hearts refuse to do it.

For example, those who drink wine, if told to eat pork would hate it, whereas these two misdeeds are equally sinful. Similarly, when some sins are constantly committed outside Ramaḍān, the heart is coloured by them, thus resulting in these sins being committed even without any action of the *shayāṭīn*.

My personal opinion is that not all the *shayāṭīn* are chained; only the most rebellious ones are. All of us can see that in Ramaḍān it does not require a great amount of effort and exertion to perform a good deed. Neither does it require a great deal of self-control and sacrifice to avoid evil, as at other times.

Mawlānā Shah Ishāq was of the opinion that, for the evil people, only the most rebellious *shayāṭīn* are chained, whereas for the righteous ones all *shayāṭīn* are chained.

The fifth favour is that forgiveness is granted on the final night of Ramaḍān (see previous Ḥadīth). Because of this great favour, the *ṣaḥābah* thought that this must be *laylat al-qadr*. They knew the great blessings of that night and accordingly asked whether it meant *laylat al-qadr*. The reply was that it was not. This is merely the favour granted for having fasted to the end of Ramaḍān.

Hadith 3. Only a Very Unfortunate Person Would Remain Deprived of Forgiveness in Ramaḍān

Ka'ab ibn 'Ujrah ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} relates that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said:

عَنْ كَعْبِ بْنِ عُجْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ

“Come near to the *minbar*,” and we came near the *minbar*. When he climbed the first step of the *minbar*, he said “*āmīn*.” When he ascended the second step, he said “*āmīn*.” When he climbed the third step, he said: “*āmīn*.” When he came down, we said: “O *rasūl* of Allah ^{sallāllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam}, we have heard from you today something which we never heard before.” He said, “When I climbed the first step, Jibrāīl appeared before me and said: ‘Destruction to him who found the blessed month of Ramaḍān and let it pass by without gaining forgiveness.’ Upon that I said: ‘*āmīn*.’ When I climbed the second step, he said, ‘Destruction to him before whom thy name is mentioned and then he does not recite *salawāt* (invoke Allah’s blessings) on you.’ I replied: ‘*āmīn*.’ When I climbed the third step, he said ‘Destruction unto him in whose lifetime his parents or either one of them reaches old age, and (through failure to serve them) he is not allowed to enter *jannah*.’ I said ‘*Aāmīn*.’”

Note: In this Ḥadīth, it appears that Jibrāīl ^{‘alayhi sālām} gave expression to three curses, upon which *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam} said *āmīn* every time. In *al-Durr al-Manthūr* it is reported that Jibrāīl ^{‘alayhi sālām} advised *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam} to say *āmīn*. Being a *malak* of such high rank, Jibrāīl’s giving these curses is sure to be accepted. May Allah in His infinite *rahmah* grant us His help and save us from these three dangers.

The first person mentioned above is he who, even in Ramaḍān

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَحْضَرُوا
الْمِنْبَرَ فَحَضَرْنَا فَلَمَّا ارْتَقَى دَرَجَةً قَالَ آمِينَ
فَلَمَّا ارْتَقَى الدَّرَجَةَ الثَّانِيَةَ قَالَ آمِينَ فَلَمَّا
ارْتَقَى الدَّرَجَةَ الثَّلَاثَةَ قَالَ آمِينَ فَلَمَّا نَزَلَ
قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَقَدْ سَمِعْنَا مِنْكَ الْيَوْمَ
شَيْئًا مَا كُنَّا نَسْمَعُهُ قَالَ إِنَّ جِبْرَائِيلَ عَرَضَ
لِي فَقَالَ بَعْدَ مَنْ أَدْرَكَ رَمَضَانَ فَلَمْ يُغْفَرَ
لَهُ قُلْتُ آمِينَ فَلَمَّا رَقِيتُ الثَّانِيَةَ قَالَ بَعْدَ
مَنْ ذُكِرْتَ عِنْدَهُ فَلَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيْكَ قُلْتُ
آمِينَ فَلَمَّا رَقِيتُ الثَّلَاثَةَ قَالَ بَعْدَ مَنْ أَدْرَكَ
أَبَوَيْهِ الْكِبَرَ عِنْدَهُ أَوْ أَحَدَهُمَا فَلَمْ يُدْخَلْهُ
الْجَنَّةَ قُلْتُ آمِينَ

رواه الحاكم وقال صحيح الإسناد كذا في الترغيب و
قال التحاوي رواه ابن حبان في ثقاته و صححه و
الطبراني في الكبير و البخاري في بر الوالدين له و
البيهقي في الشعب وغيرهم و رجاله ثقة و بسط
طرقه و روى الترمذي عن أبي هريرة بمعناه و قال ابن
حجر طرقه كثيرة كما في المرقاة

al-mubārak, spends the days in sin and disregards his duties; thus he does not get forgiveness. Ramaḍān is the month of Allah's *rahmah* and if even this month is spent carelessly, how can he expect to be pardoned for his sins? If he cannot gain Allah's forgiveness in Ramaḍān, then when will he do so? The way to seek Allah's pardon for his sins is to fulfil his obligations in Ramaḍān as ordered by Allah, such as fasting, offering *tarāwīḥ* prayers and istighfar for past sins.

The second unfortunate person is he who hears *rasūlullāh's* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} name mentioned and yet does not recite *salawāt* on him. For this reason, some [°]*ulamā* consider it *wājib* (necessary) to recite *salawāt* whenever the name of Muḥammad ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} is mentioned. In some *'aḥādīth*, the person who fails to do so is called unfortunate and stingy. Such people are mentioned as those who would lose the way to *jannah*, or even among those who will enter *jahannam* (Hell) or those who will not look upon the blessed face of *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}. The [°]*ulamā* give us various interpretations of these *'aḥādīth*. The fact still remains that failure to recite *salawāt* is indeed very unfortunate.

And why should it not be? After all, the favours bestowed upon this *ummah* through *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} are so great that neither our writings nor our lectures can do justice in describing them. His favours on us are indeed exceedingly great. Therefore any warning for the neglect of *salawāt* is justified.

On the other hand, the reward for *salawāt* is very great. The Ḥadīth teaches us that whosoever recites *salawāt* once on *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}, Allah sends ten *rahmahs* on him and the *malā'ikah* pray for him. All his sins are forgiven, his status is elevated, a reward is received as much as Mount Uhud and on his behalf *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} shall intercede (*shāfā'ah*) on the day of *qiyāmah*.

Further promises of reward are: Obtaining Allah's pleasure, *rahmah* and safety against His anger, safety from the fears of *qiyāmah*, seeing one's promised place in *jannah* while still alive on this earth. Besides these, there is the promise of never being troubled by poverty and need, and of enjoying nearness to *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}, the promise of help against enemies and the promise of being loved by others. The learned in *fiqh* have said that it is *fard* (mandatory) to recite *salawāt* at least once in a lifetime, while it is

wājib to recite the same every time the name of *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} is mentioned. Some say it is *mustahabb* (desirable).

The third person mentioned in the above Ḥadīth is he, in whose lifetime one or both of his parents reach old age, and yet he is unable to gain *jannah* by serving them. The *ulamā* have stated that in every permissible act, it is compulsory to obey the parents' commands.

One should not be disrespectful to them and be humble, even though they be non-believers. Neither should one raise his voice above theirs, nor address them by their names, and give them due precedence. When they have to be called towards the good and prohibited from evil, it should be done leniently, and one should continue to pray for them even if they refuse to accept.

At all times, they should be honoured and respected. In a Ḥadīth it is related: "The best of doors for entering *jannah* is the father. If you wish, look after it and if you wish, destroy it." A *ṣaḥābī* inquired from *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}, "What are the rights due to parents?" He replied: "They are your *jannah* and your *jahannam*," i.e. their pleasure leads you to *jannah* while their displeasure leads you to *jahannam*.

Further it is stated in a Ḥadīth that: "When an obedient son looks with love and affection at his parents, the reward for that gaze shall be the same as for a *maqbul* (accepted) *ḥaj*." In another Ḥadīth, it is stated that: "Except joining other gods with Allah, Allah forgives all sins as He pleases. However, He inflicts punishment in return for disobedience to parents, right in this world before death."

A *ṣaḥābī* said: "O *rasūl* of Allah, I want to go for *jihād*." *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} asked: "Is your mother alive?" He replied: "Yes," *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} then said: "Serve her, *jannah* lies under her feet for you." Again another Ḥadīth says, "The pleasure of Allah lies in pleasing one's father, and Allah's displeasure lies in displeasing one's father."

However where parents who had not been properly treated and respected are now dead, there is a remedy for their children according to the *shari'ah*. The Ḥadīth teaches us that, in such cases, one should constantly pray for their forgiveness and, by so doing, will be counted among those who are obedient. Another Ḥadīth states that the best deed one can do after the death of one's

father is to treat his friends and companions in a friendly manner (as the father would have done).

Hadith 4. Show Allah Your Righteousness in Ramaḍān

°Ubādah ibn Ṣāmit ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} reports that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said one day when Ramaḍān had come near: "The month of Ramaḍān, the month of blessings has come upon you, wherein Allah turns towards you and sends down to you His special *rahmah*, forgives your faults, accepts prayers, appreciates your competing for the greatest good and boasts to the *malā'ikah* about you. So show to Allah your righteousness; for truly, the most pitiable and unfortunate one is he who is deprived of Allah's mercy *rahmah* in this month."

عَنْ عُبَادَةَ ابْنِ صَامِتٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ يَوْمًا وَحَضَرْنَا رَمَضَانَ أَتَاكُمْ رَمَضَانُ شَهْرُ بَرَكَةٍ يَغْشَاكُمْ اللَّهُ فِيهِ فَيُنزِلُ الرَّحْمَةَ فِيهِ وَيَحْطُّ الْخَطَايَا وَيَسْتَجِيبُ فِيهِ الدُّعَاءَ يَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِلَى تَنَافُسِكُمْ فِيهِ وَيُنَهِئُ بِكُمْ مَلَائِكَتَهُ فَأَرَوْا اللَّهَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ الشَّقِيقِيَّ مَنْ حُرِمَ فِيهِ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
رواه الطبراني ورواه ثقة إلا أن محمد بن قيس لا يحضرن في جرح ولا تعديل كذا في الترغيب

Note: In this Ḥadīth, we read about the spirit of competition among the believers, each one trying to do more good deeds than the others. In our own home, I am greatly pleased at seeing how even the women folk compete with each other, the one trying to recite more of the Qur'ān than the others, so that, in spite of domestic responsibilities, fifteen to twenty *juz'* (parts) of the Qur'ān are read by each one daily. I mention this only out of a sense of gratitude to Allah, indicating His favour, and not to boast of it. May Allah accept their deeds and ours, and increase our capacity for good deeds.

Hadith 5. Freedom From *Jahannam* and Acceptance of *Du'ā*

Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} relates that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "During each day and night of Ramaḍān, Allah sets free a

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ

great number of souls from *ja-hannam*. And from every Muslim, during each day and night at least one *du'ā* is certainly accepted."

تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى عِتْقَاءَ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَ لَيْلَةٍ
يَعْنِي فِي رَمَضَانَ وَ إِنَّ لِكُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ فِي كُلِّ
يَوْمٍ وَ لَيْلَةٍ دَعْوَةً مُسْتَجَابَةٌ
رواه البزار كذا في الترغيب

Note: Apart from this Ḥadīth, there are many others stating that the *du'ā* of a fasting person is accepted (*mustajāb*). In one Ḥadīth, we read that the *du'ā* is accepted at the time of *iftār*, but we are generally so absorbed in eating, that we neglect this opportunity.

The well-known *du'ā* at *iftār* is often forgotten:

allā humma laka ṣumtu wa bika
āmantu wa ʿalayka tawakkaltu
wa ʿalā rizqika aftarṭu

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ صُمْتُ وَ بِكَ آمَنْتُ وَ عَلَيْكَ
تَوَكَّلْتُ وَ عَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ

“O Allah for You have I fasted, in You do I believe, and on You do I rely, and now I break this fast with food coming from You.”
ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ^{ʿadīyallāh} used to make the following *du'ā* at *iftār*:

allā humma innī as'aluka birah
mati kal latī wasi' takul lashay in
an tagh firālī

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ الَّتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ أَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِي

“O Allah, I beg You, through Your infinite *rahmah* (Mercy), which surrounds all things, to forgive me.” In some books we read that *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam} used to say:

yā wā si' alfaḍli igh firālī

يَا وَاسِعَ الْفَضْلِ اغْفِرْ لِي

“O You who give Great Bounties, forgive me“. Many other *du'ās* have been indicated for *iftār*, but no special *du'ā* is fixed. This time (at *iftār*) is one when *du'ā* is accepted; submit before Allah all your needs (and, if you remember, then make 'du'ā for me too).

Hadith 6. Three People Whose Du'ā is Surely Accepted

Abu Hurayrah ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} reports *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "There are three people whose *du'ā* is not rejected: The fasting person until he breaks the fast, the just ruler, and the oppressed person, whose *du'ā* Allah lifts above the clouds and opens unto it the doors of *jannah*, and Allah says, 'I swear by My honour, verily I shall assist you, even though it may be after sometime.' "

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا تُرَدُّ دَعْوَتُهُمُ الصَّائِمُ حَتَّى يُفْطِرَ وَ الْإِمَامُ الْعَادِلُ وَ دَعْوَةُ الْمَظْلُومِ يَرْفَعُهُ اللَّهُ فَوْقَ الْغَمَامِ وَ يُفْتَحُ لَهَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ وَ يَقُولُ الرَّبُّ وَ عِزَّتِي وَ لِأَنْصُرْتِكَ وَ لَوْ بَعْدَ حِينٍ
رواه أحمد في حديث و الترمذي و حثته و ابن خزيمة و ابن حبان في صحيحهما كذا في الترغيب

Note: In al-Durr al-Manthūr it is reported from ʿĀ'ishah ^{radīyallāhu 'anāhā} that, when Ramadān appeared, the colour of *rasūlullāh*'s face used to change. He then used to increase his *ṣalāh*, become even more humble in his *du'ā* and show even more fear of Allah.

According to another report, he hardly ever lay down in bed until Ramadān came to an end. Further, it is stated that the *malā'ikah* carrying the *ʿarsh* and say *āmīn* to the *du'ā* of those who fast.

Numerous are the *'ahādīth* stating that the fasting person's *du'ās* are answered. When Allah has so promised, and His truthful *nabī* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} had informed us, there should be no doubt whatsoever about the truth of these promises.

Yet it is strange that, in spite of this, we still find such people who apparently do not get what they pray for. They ask and do not receive, but this does not mean that their prayers have been rejected. One should at this point understand what is meant by a *du'ā* being answered.

Rasūlullāh ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} has informed us that when a Muslim prays for anything from Allah, on the condition that he does not pray for breaking off from his near relation or for anything sinful, he definitely receives one out of the following three things: he gets the exact thing which he asked for. If that is not received, then Allah either removes from his path some great calamity in exchange for what he desired, or the reward for that thing for which he prayed is stored for him in the *ākhirah*.

Another Ḥadīth states that on the day of *qiyāmah*, Allah will call his slave and say to him: "O My slave, I used to command you to ask of Me and promised to answer. Did you beg of Me?" The slave will answer: "Yes I did."

Then Allah shall reply: "You did not put forth any prayer which has not been accepted. You prayed that a certain calamity should be removed, which I did for you in the worldly life. You prayed that a certain sorrow should be removed from you, but result of that prayer was not known to you. For that, I fixed for you such and such a reward in the *ākhirah*."

Rasūlullāh ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} says that the man shall again be reminded of each and every prayer and he shall be shown how it had been fulfilled in the world or else what reward had been stored for him in the *ākhirah*. On seeing that reward, he shall wish that not a single *du'ā* of his had been answered on earth, so that he could receive the full rewards only in the *ākhirah*.

Yes, *du'ā* is indeed very important, and to neglect it at any time is a matter of great loss. Even when the outward signs seem to indicate that our prayer is not accepted, hope should not be lost. Even from the lengthy Ḥadīth at the end of this booklet, it is clear that Allah in accepting *du'ā* considers first of all our own good and welfare.

Should Allah find that granting us what we request from Him is for our welfare and interest, He grants it, otherwise not. Actually it is Allah's favour on us that we do not always get what we ask for because, very often, due to our lack of understanding, we beg for things that are not beneficial at a particular time.

Here I must draw your attention to the fact that men as well as women suffer from a bad habit of cursing their children in their anger and sorrow. Beware of this. As laid down by Allah, there are certain occasions when whatever prayer be made, it is immediately accepted.

So sometimes, due to our own stupidity, the child is cursed and when the effect of that same curse comes upon the child and lands him into a calamity, the parents go about crying and complaining. *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} commanded us not to curse ourselves, our children, possessions, or servants.

It is just possible that the curse is spoken at a time when all requests are granted, especially in Ramaḍān, which is full of such

special *mustajāb* (accepted) moments. Hence, in this month, great care should be taken.

Umar ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} narrates that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said, "Whosoever remembers Allah *ta'ālā* in Ramaḍān is definitely pardoned and one who seeks a favour from Allah *Ta'ala* is not refused."

Ibn Mas'ūd ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} reports that, on every night of Ramaḍān, an announcing *malak* from the heavens calls out: "O you seeker of good, come near, O you seeker of evil, turn away (from evil) and open your eyes."

Thereafter that *malak* calls out: "Is there any seeker of forgiveness, that he may be forgiven? Is there any one with a prayer, that his prayer may be heard? Is there anyone wanting anything, so that his wish may be fulfilled?"

Lastly, it should be borne in mind that there are certain conditions under which prayers are accepted. In the absence of these, prayers may be often rejected. Among these is the use of *halāl* food. When *ḥarām* is consumed prayers are not accepted.

Rasūlullāh ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "Many times a greatly distressed person lifts up his hands to the heavens, praying and crying: 'O Allah, O Allah.' But the food he eats is *ḥarām*, what he drinks is *ḥarām*, his clothes are of *ḥarām*, then in such cases how can his prayer be accepted?."

A story is related about a group of people in Kūfa, whose *du'ā* used to be always accepted. Whenever a cruel ruler was appointed over them, they used to pray for a curse upon him, which quickly came to destroy him.

When Ḥajjāj became ruler there, he invited these people, amongst others, to a feast. After they had all eaten, he said: "I am no longer afraid of the curse upon me from these people, because *ḥarām* food has now entered their stomachs."

At this stage, let us ponder over how much *ḥarām* is being consumed in these times, when people are even trying to make the taking of interest permissible. We find people going so far as to think that bribery and what is obtained through it is permissible, while our merchants very often justify their deceiving people when trading with them.

Hadith 7. Mercy of Allah and His Angels on those Who Eat *Suḥūr*

Ibn ʿUmar ^{radīyallāhu ʿanhu} relates, *rasūl-ullāh* ^{sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam} said: "Verily Allah and His *malā'ikah* send mercy (*salawāt*) upon those who eat *suhūr*."

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى الْمُتَسَحَّرِينَ
رواه العُلَمَاءُ فِي الْأَوْسَطِ وَابْنُ حَبَّانٍ فِي صَحِيحِهِ كَذَا فِي التَّرْغِيبِ

Note: How great is Allah's favour upon us that even the taking of food before dawn for fasting is so greatly rewarded. There are many *'ahādīth* in which the virtues of *suhūr* are explained and the rewards mentioned. ʿAllāmah al-ʿAynī—the commentator on the *ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī—has quoted the virtues of *suhūr* from seventeen different *ṣaḥābah*, and all the ʿulamā are agreed on its being *mustaḥabb* (desirable).

Many people are deprived of this great reward because of their own laziness. Some even go so far as to finish *tarāwīḥ*, eat some food in lieu of *suhūr* and go to bed. What great blessing do they lose! Because *suhūr* actually means food taken shortly before dawn.

Some authorities say that the time for *suhūr* commences after mid night (*al-Mirqāh*). The author of *al-Kashshāf* (*al-Zamakhsharī*) divided the night into six portions, stating that the last one of these is the time of *suhūr*: So that, when the night (from sunset till dawn) extends over twelve hours, the last two hours would be the correct time for *suhūr*.

Then it must also be remembered that to eat at the last permissible time is better and greater in reward than eating earlier, subject to the condition that no doubt arises as to whether *suhūr* had been eaten before the time of dawn. The *'ahādīth* are full of virtues of *suhūr*.

The *nabī* ^{sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam} said: "The difference between our fasting and that of the *ahl al-kitāb* (Jews and Christians) lies in our taking food at *suhūr* which they do not." The *nabī* has said, "Eat *suhūr*, because in it lie great blessings." And again, "In three things, are great blessings: in *jamāʿah* (company), in eating *tharīd* and in *suhūr*. In this *Ḥadīth*, the use of the word *jamāʿah* is general, wherefrom we can see that it includes *ṣalāh* with *jamāʿah* and all

those righteous deeds done in company, as thus Allah's help comes to them.

Tharīd is a tasty preparation, in which baked bread is cooked with meat. The third thing mentioned in this Ḥadīth is *suhūr*. When *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} used to invite any of the *ṣaḥābah* to eat *suhūr* with him, he used to say: "Come and take the blessed food with me."

One Ḥadīth says: "Eat *suhūr* and strengthen yourself for the fast. And sleep in the afternoon (siesta), so as to get assistance in waking up in the later portion of the night (for *ibādah*). 'Abdullāh ibn Hārith reports that one of the *ṣaḥābah* said, "I once visited *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} at a time when he was busy in taking *suhūr*. *Rasūlullāh* then said: "This is a thing full of *barakah*, which Allah has granted you. Do not give it up."

Rasūlullāh ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} in urging us repeatedly for *suhūr* has said: "Even though there is no food, then one date should be eaten or a drink of water taken." Thus, when there are definitely great advantages and reward in *suhūr*, Muslims should endeavour to observe this practice as much as possible. However, in all things moderation is important, and going beyond the bounds of moderation is harmful: neither should so little be eaten that one feels weak throughout the period of fasting, nor should so much be eaten that it causes discomfort. Repeatedly, we have been prohibited from filling the stomach excessively.

In his commentary on **al-Ṣaḥīḥ** of al-Bukhāri, Ibn Ḥajar has mentioned various reasons for the *barakah* of *suhūr*. (a) Because in it, the *sunnah* is followed. (b) Through *suhūr*, we differentiate ourselves from the ways of *ahl al-kitāb*, which we are at all times called upon to do. (c) It provides strength for worship of Allah. (d) It promotes greater sincerity in worship of Allah. (e) It aids in preventing of bad temper, which normally comes about as a result of hunger. (f) *suhūr* is the time when prayers are accepted. (g) At the time of *suhūr*, one gets the opportunity to remember Allah, make *dhikr* and *du'ā*.

These are a few of the major reasons; there are many others as well. Some *ṣūfīs* are in doubt as to whether the eating of *suhūr* conflicts with the object of fasting or not. They maintain that the object of fasting is to stay away from food, drink and sexual desires, therefore *suhūr* is against the object of fasting. In my opinion the

amount to be eaten varies according to different persons and their activities. For example for those students who are busy seeking knowledge of *dīn*, too little food at *suhūr* as well as *iftār* will be harmful; for them it is better not to have too little, because they seek religious knowledge, which is very important (for the preservation and spread of Islam).

Similar is the case of those who are busy with *dhikr* and other religious activities. Other people who have no such hard work to do should eat little at *suhūr*.

Once the *nabi* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} announced to those proceeding for *jihād*: "There is no virtue in fasting while travelling." That was in the month of Ramaḍān, when some *ṣaḥābah* were fasting. °Allāmah Sha°rāni mentions in **Sharḥ Iqnā**° that an agreement was made with us that we shall not fill our stomachs (completely) when eating, especially in the nights of Ramaḍān.

It is better that one should eat less in the nights of Ramaḍān than on other nights. After all, there is little utility in fasting after having filled oneself at *suhūr* and *iftār*. The religious divines have said: "Whoever remains hungry in Ramaḍān shall remain safe from the evil of *shayṭān* throughout the year, until the next Ramaḍān."

Sharḥ Iḥyā° **Ulūm al-Dīn** mentions the experiences of some saints, such as Sahl ibn °Abdullāh al-Tustari, who used to eat only once every fifteen days, while in Ramaḍān he ate only one morsel; but in order to follow the *sunnah*, he used to have a drink of water daily for *suhūr* and *iftār*. *Shaykh* Junaid always used to fast throughout the year. However, when his saintly friends would visit him occasionally, he used to break his fast and eat with them, saying, "The virtue of breaking fast and eating with (such) friends is not less than that of *nafl* fasting.

Similarly we can mention the experiences of numerous saints who through eating less used to discipline their inner selves; but let us bear in mind that it should not be carried to such extremes that religious activities and responsibilities are neglected as a result of weakness of the body.

Hadith 8. Many Fast and Worship at Night but Earn Nothing but Hunger and Lost Sleep

Abu Hurayrah relates that *rasūlullāh* ṣallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "Many of those who fast obtain nothing through such fasting except hunger, and many a one performs *ṣalāh* by night but obtains nothing by it, except the discomfort of staying awake."

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رواه ابن ماجه و التّفط له و النسائي و ابن خزيمة في صحيحه و الحاكم و قال على شرط البخاري ذكر لفظهما المنذري في الترغيب بمعناه

Note: With regard to this Ḥadīth, the *ʿulamā* have mentioned three different interpretations. First, this Ḥadīth may refer to those who fast during the day and then for *iftār* eat food that is *ḥarām*. All the reward for fasting is lost because of the greater sin of eating *ḥarām* and nothing is gained except remaining hungry.

Secondly, it may mean those who fast but, during fasting, engage themselves in backbiting and falsely accusing others (see later). Thirdly the person referred to may be one who, while fasting, did not stay away from evil and sin.

In this Ḥadīth all such possibilities are included. Similar is the case of the person performing *ṣalāh* at night who, because of backbiting or any other sinful act (e.g. missing *fajr ṣalāh* or keeping awake for show), loses the reward for his night of *ʿibādah*.

Hadith 9. Fasting is a Protective Shield

Abu Ubaydah reports "I have heard *rasūlullāh* ṣallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam saying: 'Fasting is a protective shield for man, as long as he does not tear up that protection.'"

عَنْ أَبِي عُبَيْدَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ الصِّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ مَا نَعَمَ يَخْرُقُهَا

رواه النسائي و ابن ماجه و ابن خزيمة و الحاكم و صحيحه على شرط البخاري و أفاضهم مختلفه حكاه المنذري في الترغيب

Note: "Protective shield" here means: Just as a man protects himself with a shield, similarly fasting protects him from his well

known enemy *shayṭān*. In other *'aḥādīth*, we are told that fasting saves one from Allah's punishment and the fire of *jahannam* in the *ākhirah*.

Once somebody inquired from *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}, "What causes the fast to be torn?" He replied: "Telling lies and backbiting." This Ḥadīth, when read along with many others, actually tells us to avoid such actions which cause fasting to be wasted.

In our times, we are fond of wasting the time with unnecessary conversations. Some *ulamā* are of the opinion that lies, backbiting, slander, etc., actually undo the fast just like eating and drinking. But the great majority of *ulamā* believe that the fast is not totally undone, but loses its blessings (*barakah*). The *ulamā* of Islam have mentioned six things, about which care should be taken in fasting:

First, one should keep the eyes away from any place where one should not look. Some go so far as to prohibit looking at one's own wife with desire, let alone another woman. Similarly, looking at any evil action or where evil is committed should be avoided.

Rasūlullāh ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "The glance is like an arrow from *shayṭān*. Whosoever out of fear of Allah, prevents himself from looking at evil, Allah shall grant him such *nūr* of faith, the taste and sweetness of which he will feel in the heart." The *sūfis* interpret the above saying to mean that those sights which should be avoided include all such places and things that take the mind away from the remembrance of Allah.

Secondly, one should guard the tongue against lies, unnecessary conversation, backbiting, arguments, abuses etc. In the **Ṣaḥīḥ** of Bukhārī we read that fasting is a shield for the fasting person; for this reason, those who fast should avoid all useless talk, joking, argument, etc. Should anyone start an argument, then say: "I am fasting."

In other words, one should not start an argument and if someone else starts it, then too, one should avoid taking it up. When the person who starts an argument is not an understanding person, then at least one should remind oneself that: "I am fasting."

During the time of our *nabī* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}, two women were fasting and suffered extreme hunger, to such an extent that the fast became unbearable and both were on the point of death. The *ṣaḥābah* brought this to the notice of our *nabī* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} who sent a bowl commanding them to vomit into it.

When they both vomited in the bowl, pieces of meat and fresh blood were found in it. The *ṣaḥābah* were greatly surprised, upon which our *nabī* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} said: "They fasted with *ḥalāl* food from Allah, but took *ḥarām* food by backbiting other people."

From the above, it also becomes clear that, by backbiting during fasting, the fast becomes much more hard. For this reason, both women were near to death. Similar is the case with other sinful acts, and experience shows that for the faithful, God-fearing persons, fasting is no hardship, whereas the sinful find it too hard to bear.

One should therefore stay away from sins and especially from major sins, like backbiting and slander, which are often indulged in to while away the time. Allah says in the Qur'ān that backbiting amounts to the (actual) eating of the flesh of one's dead brother.

We find this also narrated in various *'aḥādīth*. Once *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam}, on seeing some people, asked them to pick their teeth. They said that they had not tasted any meat that day, on which *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} said, "So and so's flesh is sticking to your teeth." It was found that they had been backbiting.

May Allah keep us safe from this evil, because we are very neglectful of this warning. All are guilty of this; not to speak of the common man, even the people of importance do it; even the religious people in their gatherings do not avoid backbiting.

Worst of all is the fact that we do not even realize what backbiting is; even when we suspect ourselves of this, we try to cover it up as narration of some event.

One of the *ṣaḥābah* inquired from *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} "What is backbiting?" *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} replied: "To mention something about your brother behind his back, which he would resent." The *ṣaḥābī* then said: "And is it still backbiting if the thing mentioned about him is really true?" Our *nabī* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} said: "In that case (if that which was mentioned is really true) it is precisely backbiting; but if what is mentioned is false, then you have in fact slandered him."

Once our *nabī* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} passed by two graves. He said: "To both the inmates of these graves, punishment is being given in the grave. One is being punished because of backbiting, the other because of not having taken precautions (to stay clean) when passing urine."

Rasūlullāh ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} also said: "There are more than seventy

degrees of evil in (usury) interest. The lowest form of it is comparable to committing adultery with one's own mother; and taking one *dirham* of interest is a worse evil than having fornicated thirty five times. The worst and most evil form of taking interest is falsely accusing a Muslim."

In various *'ahādīth* we are strongly warned against backbiting and accusing a Muslim. I very much wanted to write down here a number of such *'ahādīth*, because all our gatherings and conversations are generally filled with these evils: backbiting and false accusation. However I finally decided not to do so, because the topic under discussion here is something else—not actually backbiting.

So I once again pray that Allah may keep us safe from this evil. And I beg of my friends and brothers to pray for me too; we are full of inner faults.

کبر و نخوت جبل و غفلت حد و کینه بد ظنی
کذب و بد عمدی ریا و بغض و غیبت دشمنی
کون بیماری ہے یا رب جو نہیں مجھ میں ہوئی
عَافِنِي مِن كُلِّ دَاءٍ وَ اقْضِ عَنِّي حَاجَتِي
إِنَّ لِي قَلْبًا سَقِيمًا أَنْتَ شَافِي لِلْمَلِئِيلِ

What ailment is there O Allah that is not in me, Heal me from every illness and grant me my needs. Verily I have a heart that is sick, Verily You are Healer of the sick.

Thirdly, we should be careful that the ears are kept away from listening to anything undesirable (*makrūh*). It is equally unlawful to listen to anything that should not be said. *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} has said, "In backbiting, both the backbiter and the one who listens to it are equal partners in sin."

Fourthly, the rest of the body should be kept away from sin and unlawful things. Neither should the hands touch it, nor the feet walk towards it. Special care should be taken especially at the time of *iftār* that no such thing enters the stomach about which there is any doubt of its being *ḥalāl*. When a person fasts and, at *iftār* time, breaks his fast with *ḥarām* food, he is like a sick person who takes medicine as a cure but also adds a little poison, which kills him.

Fifthly, after having fasted, it is not advisable to fill the stomach completely even with *ḥalāl* food at *iftār* because then the purpose of fasting is defeated. Fasting seeks to diminish one's bodily desires and increases one's faith and spiritual powers.

For eleven months, we eat and drink freely enough; in

Ramaḍān this should be cut down to a minimum. We have a bad habit of filling our bellies at *iftār* to make up for what was lost, and again at *suhūr* in preparation for the day, thus actually increasing our daily consumption.

Ramaḍān for such people increases their appetite. Many such items of food are eaten that we normally do not eat at other times. This type of habit is completely against the spirit of Ramaḍān and the true spirit of fasting.

Imam al-Ghazālī asks the same question: "When the object of fasting is to conquer our bodily desires in opposition to *iblis* (*shayṭān*), how can this possibly be done by eating excessively at *iftār*?"

Actually in that case we have only changed the times of eating, and not really fasted. In fact by having various types of delicious foods, we consume even more than in normal times. The result is that, instead of lessening the bodily desires, these are considerably increased.

The real benefit of fasting comes as a result of actual hunger in the true sense. Our *nabi* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "*Shayṭān* lives in the body of man like blood; so, close up his path by remaining hungry," i.e. when the body is hungry, the spirit receives strength.

Apart from hunger, fasting gives us an opportunity to appreciate the condition of the poor and moneyless and thus creates sympathetic feelings towards them. This too can be attained by remaining hungry and not by filling the stomach with delicious foods at *suhūr*, so that one does not feel hungry until *iftār*.

Once a person went to Bishr al-Ḥāfī, whom he found shivering in the cold, in spite of having warm clothes lying at his side. That person inquired: "Is this a time for taking off the clothes?" Bishr replied: "There are numerous poor and needy ones. I am unable to sympathise with them. The least I could do is to be in their condition."

The *sūfīs* plead for the same attitude in fasting and so do the *fuqahā* (jurists). In **Maraqī al-Falāḥ** it is written: "Do not eat excessively at *suhūr*, as this is a way to lose the object of fasting." Allāmah al-Taḥṭāwī writes, "The reward for fasting becomes definitely more when hunger is really felt. Similarly, a feeling is developed for the poor and hungry ones."

Our *nabi* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} himself said: "Allah does not dislike the

filling of anything to the brim more than He dislikes the filling of the stomach." On another occasion, *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said, "A few morsels should suffice which can keep the back straight. The best way for man is that one third should be filled with food, one third with drink, while the other third remains empty." *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} himself used to fast for days together without eating in between.

I have seen my *ustādh* (teacher) Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad eating only slightly more than one thin *roti* (hand made bread) at *iftār* and *suhūr* during the whole month of Ramaḍān. When any of his near ones used to urge him to eat more, he would reply: "I am not hungry. I merely sat down to eat because of my friends."

About Mawlānā Shāh 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Rā'ipūrī, I have heard that, in Ramaḍān, for days together he used to fast, drinking at *iftār* and *suhūr* only a few cups of tea without milk and nothing else.

Once his most trusted follower (and *khalīfah*) Mawlānā Shāh 'Abd al-qādir remarked with anxiety: "*Hā.drat* you will become very weak if you do not eat anything." To this, Mawlānā Shāh Rā'ipuri replied: "Praise be to Allāh, I am experiencing something of the pleasure of *jannah*." May Allāh grant us all the ability to follow those pious souls, *āmin*.

The sixth point is that, after fasting, one should always have some anxiety as to whether one's fast had been accepted by Allāh or not. This should be the case with all form of *'ibādah* (worship).

One never knows whether some important aspect may have been left out, of which no notice was taken. One should always fear that Allāh may reject one's deeds. *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "Many reciters of the Qur'ān are being cursed by the Qur'ān."

He also said: "On the day of *qiyāmah* one of those whom Allāh shall judge first shall be a *shahīd* (martyr in the path of Allāh). Allāh shall call him and remind him of all His favours to him, which he shall admit."

"He shall then be asked: 'What have you done by way of expressing gratitude for these favours?' The *shahīd* shall reply: 'I fought in Your cause till I became a *shahīd*.' Allāh shall reply: 'It is not so. You fought so that you can be called a brave man, and so it has been said.' Thereafter, it shall be commanded that he be dragged, face on the ground, and thrown into *jahannam*."

“Thereafter, an *‘ālim* (scholar) shall be called. He too shall be reminded of Allah’s favours and asked the same question. He shall reply: ‘O Allah! I sought to acquire knowledge, taught others and for Your sake recited the Qur’ān.’ Allah shall say: ‘This is not true. You did all that, merely so that it may be said that you are learned, and so it has been said.’ Then it shall be commanded that he too be dragged, face on the ground, and thrown into *jahannam*.”

“Thereafter a rich man shall be called. After being reminded of Allah’s favours, and admitting them, in reply to Allah’s question as to what he did to express his gratitude, he shall reply: ‘There was no worthy cause wherein I did not spend in charity for Your sake.’ Allah’s reply shall be: ‘Not true. You did all that, so that it may be said that you are very generous. And so it has been said.’ Then it shall be commanded that he too be dragged, face on the ground, and thrown into *jahannam*.”

Many such incidents are related in *‘ahādīth*. So, a fasting person should not only be sincere but also hope that Allah will accept his fast.

The above-mentioned six points are compulsory for all truly righteous persons. As for the exceptionally pious ones, a seventh point is added. That is, during fasting, the heart should not be turned towards anyone except Allah, so much so that during the course of the fast there should be no worry as to whether there shall be something to eat for *iftār*.

Some *mashāyikh* even consider it a fault to think about food for *iftār*, or that one should try to get something, because this shows lack of faith in Allah’s promise of being responsible for the granting of *rizq*.

In the commentary of *Iḥyā’ Ulūm al-dīn* the author goes so far as to relate that, should something for *iftār* arrive from somewhere before the time of *iftār* the *mashāyikh* would give it to somebody else, for fear that for the rest of that day, the heart may be turned away from Allah by keeping it. This can, of course only be carried out by the exceptionally pious ones. We cannot even imagine having such strong faith. Should we try to follow them without it, we may destroy ourselves.

The Qur’ān commands: “Fasting has been prescribed for you.” The commentators of the Qur’ān say that from this *‘āyah* it is seen that fasting is made compulsory for every part of the body. Thus,

fasting of the tongue means to avoid falsehood, etc., fasting of the ears means not listening to evil, fasting of the eyes means not to look at any form of evil and sin. Similarly, fasting of the self means to be free from all bodily desires. Fasting of the heart means removing from it the love of worldly things. Fasting of the mind means avoiding thoughts about anything other than Allah.

Hadith 10. A Single Fast of Ramaḍān More Valuable Than a Lifetime of Fasts Outside Ramaḍān

Abu Hurayrah reports that *rasūl-ullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "Whosoever eats during one day of Ramaḍān, without a valid excuse (acceptable in *shari'ah*), shall never be able to recoup that day even by fasting for the rest of his life."

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ أَفْطَرَ يَوْمًا مِنْ رَمَضَانَ مِنْ غَيْرِ رُخْصَةٍ وَلَا مَرَضٍ لَمْ يَقْضِهِ صَوْمُ الدَّهْرِ كُلِّهِ وَإِنْ صَامَهُ

رواه أحمد و الترمذي و أبو داود و ابن ماجة و الدارمي و البخاري في ترجمة الباب كذا في المشكوة قلت و بسط الكلام على طرقه العيني في شرح البخاري

Note: The view of some *ulamā* is that when anybody has, without any valid excuse, failed to fast any one day of Ramaḍān and has dishonoured it by eating etc., he can never make up (*qaḍā'*) for the same, even if he fasts for the rest of his life. 'Alī ^{raḍiyallāhu 'anhu} held this view.

However, the vast majority of *ulamā* maintain that if a person did not fast for one day of Ramaḍān, then one fast will be enough as *kaffārah*. On the other hand, if a person had started a fast in Ramaḍān and had then broken it knowingly during the day without any valid excuse, according to the *shari'ah* he shall have to fast for sixty days consecutively with *suḥūr* and *iftār*.

However the full virtue and blessings as in Ramaḍān will never be obtained. This is the meaning of the above Ḥadīth i.e. where a day of Ramaḍān had been lost without excuse, no number of fasts by way of *kaffārah* will bring back the true blessings of a day in Ramaḍān.

All this is for those who keep the *qaḍā'* fast as *kaffārah*. How unfortunate and misguided are those who completely ignore the fast and do not observe it at all in Ramaḍān, nor fast thereafter as *kaffārah*.

Fasting is one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, and *rasūl-ullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} has mentioned five such pillars. First and foremost is the oneness of Allah and the *nubūwwah* of Muḥammad ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} and thereafter the four remaining famous pillars: *ṣalāh*, fasting, *zakāh* and *ḥaj*.

A large number of Muslims are counted as such in the records, yet they do not uphold even one of these five pillars. In official papers and the counting, they will be recorded as Muslims, whereas in Allah's record they can hardly be counted as such.

Ibn 'Abbās relates a Ḥadīth stating: "Islam is based on three principles (1) faith, (2) *ṣalāh*, (3) fasting. Whoever fails to uphold any one of these is a disbeliever, and deserves capital punishment." As regards the later portion of this Ḥadīth, the *ulamā* have said that they only become disbelievers when, together with failing to uphold any principle, they also deny its necessity or its being a principle.

No matter what meaning is given, the fact remains that *rasūl-ullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} most strongly spoke out against such people, and those who fail to keep up the obligatory practices (*farā'id*) of *dīn* should indeed fear Allah's anger greatly. The pleasures of life are short-lived and death will surely bring them face to face with Allah. There none can escape and only obedience to His commands in this world can save us.

There are those ignorant persons who do not fast, but much worse is the case of those who not only refuse to fast, but they make fun of the month of fasting e.g. saying in a sarcastic manner, "He should fast who has no foods in his house," or "What does Allah gain by having us suffer hunger?"

Such words should never be uttered; it should be remembered that to make fun of the smallest part of our *dīn* can lead to *kufr* (apostasy). Should any person perform not a single *ṣalāh* in his life, nor fast one single day, or fail to perform any *farḍ* obligations in Islam, he does not become a *kāfir* provided he does not deny these being necessary. Whatever (*farḍ*) obligation has been performed is rewarded and whatever *farḍ* is not performed shall be punished.

But to make fun of even the smallest part of the *dīn* can lead to *kufr* (apostasy), as a result of which all good actions are lost. From this, it can be seen how dangerous such scoffing is; so we should beware of any dishonourable words about fasting.

Even otherwise, anyone failing to fast in Ramaḍān without a valid excuse becomes a transgressor (*fāsiq*). Some *fuqahā* (jurists) have gone so far as to state that anyone eating publicly in Ramaḍān without (valid) excuse, should be put to death. Even in the absence of an Islamic Government to enforce this law (and thus put an end to such actions), nothing stops us from expressing our dislike, resentment and hatred against such actions.

That is the least to which our *īmān* (faith) should drive us, and the minimum level of faith is to consider such actions bad at heart. Having come so far, I consider these ten *'ahādīth* sufficient in this first chapter for those who wish to follow them sincerely. As for those who have no intention to change their actions accordingly, no amount of writing will be useful. May Allah grant me and all Muslims the strength to do righteous deeds, because we all have our failings. *Āmīn*.

Chapter 2. *Laylat al-Qadr*—Night of Power

Amongst the nights of Ramaḍān, there is one called *laylatal qadr*, a night that is noted for its great (*barakah*). The Qur'ān describes it as being greater in *barakah* and spiritual value than a thousand months, which of course means that it is more valuable than eighty three years and four months.

Fortunate indeed is that person who attains the full *barakah* of this night by spending it in the worship of Allah, because he has then obtained the reward of *ibādah* (worship) for eighty three years, four months and even more. Indeed (the granting of) this night for the faithful Muslims is a great favour.

The Origin

Regarding this night, in a Ḥadīth reported by 'Anas in al-Durr al-Manthūr, *rasūlullāh* ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam is reported to have said: "*Laylatal qadr* was granted to this *ummah* (of mine) and not to any other *ummah* before this."

As regards the reason for the granting of *laylatal qadr*, various views are held. According to some *'ahādīth*, one reason is given thus: *Rasūlullāh* ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam used to ponder over the longer lives of peoples of the past ages and when comparing them with the much shorter lives of his *ummah*, he became very sad since, if his *ummah* wished to compete with the people before them, then because of

their shorter lives, it would be impossible for them to either copy or surpass the previous *ummahs* in the doing of righteous deeds.

Therefore, Allah in His infinite *rahmah* granted them this night of great blessings. This means that, if any fortunate person of this *ummah* during his life-time spends ten such nights in the worship of his Creator he would have gained the reward of (*ibādah*) worship for eight hundred and thirty three years and even more.

Another report states that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} once related to the *ṣaḥābah* the story of a very righteous man from among the Banī Isra'īl, who spent one thousand months in *jihād*. On hearing this, the *ṣaḥābah* felt that they could not attain the same reward, whereupon Allah granted them this night.

Still another report states that it so happened that our *nabī* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} once mentioned the names of the four *anbiyā'* from among the Banī Isra'īl, each of whom spent eighty years in Allah's sincere worship and not disobeying in the least. They were *nabī* Ayyub ^{'alayhi salām}, Zakariyya ^{'alayhi salām}, Ezekiel ^{'alayhi salām} and Yusha' ^{'alayhi salām}. The *ṣaḥābah* heard this, wondering how to copy their achievements. Then Jibrā'īl ^{'alayhi salām} appeared and recited *sūrah qadr* wherein the *fadā'il* of this particular night were revealed.

There are other reports too, explaining the origin of the Night of Power. But, no matter which of these we accept, the important fact remains that Allah has granted us this night, as a great favour, and how fortunate are those divines who have never missed worship in this night.

As to which particular night it is, here again approximately fifty different views are reported. It is not easy for me to enumerate them all, but the most generally accepted versions follow in the following pages of this chapter. Because the Qur'ān *majīd* itself mentions the night, we shall commence with a short commentary of *sūrah qadr*.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

○ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ○ "We have indeed revealed this (message) in the Night of Power" (*al-qadr 1*). Reference here is made to the fact that, on this specific night, the Qur'ān was sent down from *al-lawḥ al-mahfūz* (the Preserved Tablet) to the lower heavens (above the earth). The mere fact that the Qur'ān was revealed on this

night would have been sufficient to ensure its greatness. But, apart from this fact, it is also noted for many other things.

In the very next verse, by way of increasing our interest in the matter under discussion, a question is asked: **وَ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ** ○
 “And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is?” (*al-qadr* 2).

In other words, the question asked here is: Have you any knowledge as to the greatness and importance of this night? Have you any knowledge as to great favours and bounties that go with it? The next verse proceeds to explain its greatness: **لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ** ○
 “The Night of Power is better than a thousand months” (*al-qadr* 3).

The true meaning here is that the reward for spending this night in worship (*ibādah*) is better and more than that for having spent one thousand months in worship (*ibādah*); but we are not told here as to how much more rewarding it is.

تَنْزِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ○
 “Therein come down the angels (*malā'ikah*) and the spirit (souls) with Allah's permission, on every errand” (*al-qadr* 4).

A fine explanation is given for this verse by Imam al-Rāzī rahmatullāh 'alayh. Commenting on this verse, he explains that when man first appeared on earth, the *malā'ikah* looked upon him with concern. They even ventured to ask Allah “Will You place on this earth, one who shall be riotous therein and shed blood”?

Similarly, when his parents noted his original form as a mere drop of sperm, they too looked upon it with dislike, so much so, that they considered it as something which dirtied the clothes and had to be washed away. But later, when Allah made that same sperm into the fine form of a child, they began to love and treasure him. So far have things now progressed that, when on this Night of Power we find that same man worshipping Allah and praising Him, then those very angels (*malā'ikah*) come towards him, obviously repentant for the thoughts they once had.

In this verse, where it is mentioned **وَالرُّوحُ** “and the Spirit....” the reference is to Jibrā'īl alayhissalām who descends to the Earth during this night. *Mufasssirs* of the Qur'an have given various meanings of this word. Let us look at some of them:

a. The vast majority of *mufasssirs* are agreed that Jibrā'īl alayhissalām is

- meant here and, according to Imam al-Rāzī, this is the most correct meaning. Allah first makes mention of the *malā'ikah* and then, because of Jibrā'īl ^{'alayhis salām} special status among them, a separate mention is made of him.
- b. Some *mufasssirs* hold the view that "spirit" here means one specific angel (*malak*) of such extraordinary and gigantic proportions that before him the Heavens and the Earth appear as small as a morsel.
 - c. Another group of *mufasssirs* say that "spirit" here means one group of *malā'ikah* who never ordinarily appear, and only on this night are they seen by other *malā'ikah*.
 - d. Some commentators believe that "spirit" here designates one specific creation of Allah, who partake of food and drink, and yet are neither men nor *malā'ikah*.
 - e. There is also a view that "spirit" here refers to the *nabi* ^{'alayhis salām} *Īsā* who on this night comes down to look at the righteous deeds of this *ummah*.
 - f. The last interpretation we wish to mention here is that "spirit" means Allah's special *rahmah* which comes behind the angel's descent.

There are other interpretations also, but as already stated, the first opinion given above is the best known. In this connection, Imam al-Bayhaqi relates a Ḥadīth by Anas, wherein *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} is reported to have said: "On *laylatal qadr*, Jibrā'īl ^{'alayhis salām} comes down with a group of angels (*malā'ikah*) and prays for *rahmah* for every one whom they find busy in worship ([°]*ibādah*).

This same verse under discussion mentions:

By Allah's permission, come
down on the Earth for blessed
tasks (*al-qadr* 4.)

يَاذُنْ رَبُّهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ○

The author of *Mazāhir-e Ḥaq* writes that on this night, ages ago, the *malā'ikah* were created, long before the creation of Adam ^{'alayhis salām} was begun in the shape of some matter on this same

night. *Jannah* was planted with trees, and numerous *'ahādīth* bear witness to the fact that on this night prayers are accepted.

Similarly we read in the book, **al-Durr al-Manthūr**, that according to a Ḥadīth it was on this night that the *nabī* ^{alayhi} ^{sallam} *ʿĪsā* was lifted up bodily into the Heaven and also it was on this night that the repentance (*tawbah*) of Banī Isrā'īl was accepted.

○ **سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ** "Peace reigns until the break of dawn" (*al-qadr* 5). Indeed this night is full of peace. Throughout its duration the *malā'ikah* offer salutations to the faithful believers.

As one group goes up, another group comes down (with the same greetings), as indicated in some narrations. Another interpretation is that it is a night of complete safety from evil and mischief. These *barakāt* last all night until the break of dawn, and are not limited to any one part of the night.

And now, having noted a few virtues of this night as explained in the words of Allah, we now turn to the Ḥadīth where we read more about the virtues of the night.

Hadith 1. All Sins Forgiven on Worshipping During This Night

Abu Hurayrah ^{radhiyallah} ^{ʿanhu} reports that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallah} ^{ʿalayhi} ^{wa sallam} said: "Whoever stands in (prayers and worship) on the Night of Power, with complete faith and with sincere hope of gaining reward, all his previous sins are forgiven."

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ
كذا في الترغيب عن البخاري ومسلم

Note: In the above Ḥadīth, "standing" refers to *ṣalāh*, but includes any other form of *ʿibādah*, as for example *dhikr*, *tilāwah* etc. The phrase "with sincere hope of gaining reward," means that one's intention should be pure and one should stand before Allah in great humility and sincerity.

According to al-Khaṭṭābī, it means that one should have complete faith in the promise that deeds shall be rewarded and should not have the idea that this form of *ʿibādah* is a burden, nor should he have any doubts (as to whether the promised reward shall be granted).

After all, it is a known fact that when one aims high and desires a great reward, while at the same time having complete certainty

of receiving it, the task of striving hard in prayers to attain that goal becomes easy. This is the reason why those who have become spiritually elevated in Allah's sight find it easy to remain in *ibādah* almost at all times.

It will be noted that where the Ḥadīth speaks about previous sins being forgiven, the *ulamā* have said that this forgiveness (as mentioned in the above Ḥadīth and in others) refers only to minor sins, because as indicated in the Qur'ān, the major sins can only be forgiven after sincere repentance, with the vow never to commit such sins again. So whenever a Ḥadīth states that sins are forgiven, the *ulamā* take it to imply minor sins.

My late father (may Allah bless him and grant *nūr* in his resting place) used to say that for two reasons the word "minor" has been omitted in the *'aḥādīth*. First, he says, a true Muslim is one on whom no major sins should remain, because whenever a major sin has been committed by him, he will never rest or find peace until he has sincerely repented to his Sustainer.

Secondly, during such great and blessed days and nights, when a true Muslim stands before his Sustainer in prayers and adoration, hoping to gain reward, then he in his conscience feels grieved for his previous sins, which, together with the resolution not to return to such deeds, are the most important requirements of *tawbah* (seeking forgiveness).

This means that, on such days and nights, the worshipper indeed repents for major sins that have been committed by him (leaving only minor sins to be forgiven). It is best however that, when a night like *laylatal qadr* come along, one should first of all repent verbally, with his heart full of sincere longing for forgiveness, so that Allah in His infinite *rahmah* may forgive all forms of sins. And when you do this, remember me too in your prayers.

Hadith 2. To Be Deprived of *Laylatal Qadr* is to Be Deprived of All Good

'Anas ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} reports: "Once when Ramaḍān began, the *rasūl* of Allah ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: 'A month has verily come upon you, wherein lies a night better than a thou-

عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ دَخَلَ رَمَضَانَ
فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ
هَذَا الشَّهْرَ قَدْ حَضَرَكُمْ وَفِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ

sand months. Whoever misses such a night, has indeed been deprived of all that is good; and none is deprived of it, except he who is really unfortunate.' "

ألف شهر من حرمها فقد حرم الخير كله و
لا يحرم خيرها إلا محروم
رواه ابن ماجه و إسناده حسن إن شاء الله كذا في
الترغيب وفي المشكوة عنه إلى كل محروم

Note: Who can have any doubt as to the misfortune of the person who is either deprived or deprives himself of the great good of *laylatal qadr*? There are those who, during their service and terms of employment, have to stay awake by night throughout the year. How easy should it be, for the sake of gaining the reward of over eighty years worship (*ibādah*) to stay awake for one month in Allah's service?

Because of lack of interest, there is no desire in the heart. If that were present, then even a thousand nights in worship of Allah would become exceedingly easy. It is this urge and desire that we must create. Our *nabi* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} had been promised time and again that he had nothing to fear in the *ākhirah* and had been given good news as to his exalted position. Yet night after night he was seen in *ibādah*, so much so that his feet became swollen.

Among the believers of Islam, there are many saintly followers who copied his example. They were human beings like us, and none can thus say that it is impossible for us to have that same desire for worship; it is really a matter of taking this to heart. Let us look at the example of the following illustrious sons of Islam.

Once such man was *Umar* ^{ṣadiqun} who, having performed his *ishā' ṣalāh*, would return home and then remain in *ṣalāh* throughout the night, until the *adhān* was heard for *fajr*.

Then there is the example of *Uthmān* ^{ṣadiqun} who, after fasting the whole day, used to spend the whole night in *ṣalāh* apart from getting a little sleep during the first third of the night. It is well known about him that he used to recite the whole Qur'ān during one *rak'ah* at a time.

In *Ihyā' Ulum al-Dīn* by Imam al-Ghazālī, Abu Tālib Makki mentions some forty men from among the *tābi'in* who used to perform *fajr ṣalāh* with the same ablution, (*wuḍū*) with which they had performed their *ishā' ṣalāh*.

Shaddād ^{ṣadiqun} was one of the *ṣahābah* who used to lie awake

through the night turning from side to side until *fajr* and used to say: "O Allah! The fear of fire of *jahannam* has driven away my sleep." Aswad ibn Yazīd ^{"abū ḥabīb"}, apart from sleeping a little between *maghrib* and *ishā'*, used to remain in *ibādah* during Ramaḍān throughout the night.

It is said of Sa'īd ibn al-Mysayyab that for fifty years he used to perform *ishā'* and *fajr ṣalāh* with the same ablution (*wuḍū'*). Then there is the example of Ṣilah ibn Ashyam who, after spending the whole night in Allah's worship, used to say at the break of the day: "O Allah! I am not fit to beg *jannah* (heaven) of You, but all I beg of You is, that You save me from *jahannam* (hell)."

Qatādah ^{"abū ḥabīb"} used to recite the whole Qur'ān every three nights of Ramaḍān but, during the last ten nights, he used to finish the whole Qur'ān every night. About *imām* Abu Ḥanīfah ^{"abū ḥabīb"} it is well known that for forty years he performed *ishā'* and the next morning's *fajr ṣalāh* with the same *wuḍū'*.

When his companions inquired of him as to how he had obtained the strength for this, he replied: "It is in answer to a special prayer that I made to Allah by the blessedness of His Special Names." He merely slept a little in the afternoon, about which he said; 'In the Ḥadīth we are advised to do so.' (In other words, even in the afternoon sleep, his intention was to follow the *sunnah*).

The same Imam Abu Ḥanīfah used to cry so much while reciting the Qur'ān that his neighbours would feel pity for him. Once he wept all night, crying while reciting the following verse again and again: \bigcirc "بَلِ السَّاعَةِ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذَىٰ وَآمْرٌ \bigcirc "Nay, the Hour (of Judgement) is the time promised for them (for their reckoning), and that hour will be most grievous and bitter" (*al-qamar* 46).

Ibrāhīm ibn Adham went so far as not to sleep at all in Ramaḍān, night or day. Imam al-Shāfi'ī used to recite the Qur'ān about sixty times during the days and nights of Ramaḍān. And apart from these, there were countless other pious souls who used to act diligently on the injunction of the Quranic verse: \bigcirc "وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ \bigcirc "I have created the *jinn* and Human that they may only serve Me" (*al-dhāriyāt* 56).

These are some examples of those who lived in earlier times. Even today, there are many who, with the same devotion, serve

Allah. Even in these times of laxness, there are people who truly try to follow the example of *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} and do not let their worldly pursuits or their physical comfort stand in their way for Allah's worship.

The *rasūl* of Allah said: "Allah says: 'O son of Aadam, spend your time in My service, and I shall bless you with freedom from want, and I shall remove your poverty. Otherwise, I shall load you with pressing engagements and duties, while your poverty and needs shall not decrease.'" How often we observe the truth of this. Some people serve only Allah while having no means of livelihood, and yet they need nothing.

Hadith 3. Descent of the *Malā'ikah*

Anas ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} reports that *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "On the Night of Power, Jibra'īl ^{'alayhi sālām} descends upon the earth with a group of *malā'ikah* praying for blessings for every servant of Allah whom they see in worship, standing or sitting, and engrossed in Allah's praise. Then on the day of *ʿīd* Allah boasts about them to the *malā'ikah* (who had been critical at the time of Ādam's creation), 'O My *malā'ikah*, what is the reward of that worker who has done his job very well?' They reply: 'O our Sustainer, his reward should be given to him in full.' To this Allah replies, 'O My *malā'ikah*, verily My servants, the males among them as well as females, have today duly performed their obligatory duty, thereafter they set forth to *ʿīd* prayer-ground raising their voices in *duʿā* to Me. I swear by My Honour, by My Grandeur, by My Grace and by My Exalted Position, that I shall surely answer the

عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا كَانَ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ نَزَلَ جِبْرَائِيلُ فِي سَبْكَتِهِ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى كُلِّ عَبْدٍ قَائِمٍ أَوْ قَاعِدٍ يَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ عِيدِهِمْ يَعْنِي يَوْمَ فَطْرِهِمْ بِأَمْرِ بِهِمْ مَلَائِكَتُهُ فَقَالَ يَا مَلَائِكَتِي مَا جَزَاءُ أُجِيرٍ وَفِي عَمَلِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا جَزَاؤُهُ أَنْ يُؤْتَى أَجْرَهُ قَالَ مَلَائِكَتِي عَيْدِي وَإِيمَانِي قَضُوا فَرِيضَتِي عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ خَرَجُوا يَعْجُونَ إِلَى الدُّعَاءِ وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلَالِي وَكَرَمِي وَعُلُوِّي وَارْتِفَاعِ مَكَانِي لِأَجْسَانِهِمْ فَيَقُولُ ارْجِعُوا فَقَدْ غَفَرْتُ لَكُمْ وَبَدَلْتُ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ حَسَنَاتٍ قَالَ فَيَرْجِعُونَ مَغْفُورًا لَهُمْ

رواه البيهقي في شعب الإيمان كذا في المشكوة

du'ās of these people.' Thereafter Allah addresses the people: 'Go forth, I have forgiven your sins, and have replaced your evil deeds with righteous ones.' These people then return from the *'idgāh* in such a condition that their sins stand forgiven."

Note: In this Ḥadīth, it is clearly mentioned that Jibra'īl ^{alayhi salām} comes down with the *malā'ikah*. Another Ḥadīth reported by Ibn 'Abbās and quoted by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilāni ^{rahmatullah 'alayh} in his book *Ghunyah* further elucidates the contents of this Ḥadīth.

It is reported that Jibra'īl ^{alayhi salām}, after his descent commands the *malā'ikah* to go to the house of everyone busy with prayers, and greet him by shaking his hands. Thereupon the *malā'ikah* spread forth, visiting every house, whether large or small, whether in the jungle or on a ship, wherein a believer lives to shake his hands.

However, certain houses are not entered: The house wherein a dog or a pig is found, the house wherein one is found unclean (*janābah*) as a result of adultery, and the house wherein pictures (images) of men and animals are displayed.

How unfortunate that Muslims' houses should be deprived of the blessed entry of *malā'ikah* simply because there are pictures of men and animals being displayed, solely for the sake of decoration. A single picture may have been hung by some member of the household, as a result of which the complete household is deprived of these blessings.

Hadith 4. When to look for *Laylatal Qadr*?

'Ā'ishah ^{radīyallāhu 'anā} reports that *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallīallāhu 'alayhi wa salām} said: "Seek *laylatal qadr* among the odd numbered nights of the last ten days of the month of Ramaḍān."

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَحَرَّوْا لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ فِي الْوَتْرِ مِنَ الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَاخِرِ مِنْ
مشكوة عن البخاري

Note: According to the great majority of the religious scholars, the last ten nights commence on the 21st night. Such is the case whether the month of Ramaḍān consists of 29 days or 30. So, one should seek *laylatal qadr* on the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th night.

Ibn Ḥazm has a different opinion, saying that the word *'ashrah* as used in the Ḥadīth means ten. As such, the above calculations

will only be correct in cases where the month of Ramaḍān consists of thirty days. However, when there are only twenty nine days in the month (as often happens), the last ten days will commence with the 19th day, and the night being the 20th night. According to this calculation, it would appear that the unevenly numbered nights will actually be the 20th, 22th, 24th, 26th, 28th, and 30th nights.

But all [°]ulamā agree that when in search of *laylatal qadr rasūl-ullāh* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} went into *i'tikāf*, he commenced it on the 21st night of Ramaḍān. In view of this, these [°]ulamā consider the odd nights to be the appropriate nights for *laylatal qadr*.

One should, therefore, spend each and every night from the 20th onwards in glo[°]ibādah, so that one may be sure of having got the *barakah* of Ramaḍān. Spending ten or eleven nights in devotion is definitely not so difficult, if one looks at the great reward that is promised.

Hadith 5. Precise Knowledge of *Laylatal Qadr* Was Taken Away

[°]Ubādah ibn Sāmit ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} said: "Once the *nabī* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} came out to inform us of the (correct date of) *laylatal qadr*. Unfortunately, a quarrel took place between two Muslims, whereupon he said: 'I came out to inform you as to when *laylatal qadr* occurs, but because two people quarrelled with each other, the knowledge of the correct date was taken away. Perhaps that is better for you. So, seek it among the ninth, seventh and fifth nights.' "

عَنْ أَبَادَةَ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ
خَرَجَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِيُخْبِرَنَا
بِلَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ فَتَلَاخَى رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
فَقَالَ خَرَجْتُ لِأُخْبِرْكُمْ بِلَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ
فَتَلَاخَى فُلَانٌ وَ فُلَانٌ فَرَفَعَتْ وَ عَمِيَ أَنْ
يَكُونَ خَيْرًا لَكُمْ فَاتَمِسُوهَا فِي التَّاسِعَةِ وَ
السَّابِعَةِ وَ الْخَامِسَةِ
مشكوة عن البخاري

Note: Three important points are referred to in this Ḥadīth. Firstly, there is mention of a quarrel, as a result of which the knowledge of the precise night of *laylatal qadr* was lost to us. Arguments and quarrels are always the cause of loss of blessings (*barakah*).

Once *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} inquired of the *ṣaḥābah*: "Shall I inform you of an action that is better than *ṣalāh*, fasting and charity?" The *ṣaḥābah* replied: "Certainly." *Rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} then said: "Maintain peaceful and good relations amongst yourselves, for verily quarrels among yourselves destroy (shave off) faith," i.e. just as a razor shaves off the hair, so does quarrelling affect the *dīn*.

Let alone the worldly people, even those among us who appear exceptionally religious and busy with *dhikr*, are victims of these arguments and strife, and are obstinate in their stand, in spite of the saying of the *nabi* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam}. In the first chapter of this book, we read how *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} said that to insult a Muslim is indeed a serious crime and equivalent to the worst kind of usury, but we do not even spare a Muslim's honour, or refrain from insults, and little notice is taken of the injunctions of Allah and His *rasūl*.

The Holy Qur'ān says: "And argue not among yourselves, otherwise you will lose courage and your strength will depart." It is now the duty of those who always seek to injure and destroy the honour and dignity of others to ponder and reflect how much harm they have in fact done to themselves, and think how much they have, through these despicable deeds, become degraded themselves in Allah's sight and in the sight of those around them.

Rasūlullāh ^{ṣallāllāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} said that he who severs relations with a brother Muslim for more than three days, and dies in this state, will go straight to *jahannam*. In another Ḥadīth, it is stated that, on every Monday and Thursday, the actions of human beings are brought before Allah. Then through His *rahmah* (as a result of certain good deeds), forgiveness is granted, except to the idolaters and those who set up equals to Allah. However, regarding those two people between whom a quarrel has taken place, friendship having been cut off, it shall be said, "Leave their affair in suspense until such time as they become reconciled."

Another Ḥadīth states that, when actions are produced before Allah every Monday and Thursday, repentance is accepted from those who repent, and forgiveness is granted to those who seek pardon. As for those who had arguments (with each other) they are left as they were.

A Ḥadīth further teaches us that, on the night of the 14th of *sha'ḥān* (*shabi-i bara'at*), the *rahmah* of Allah is directed at all Allah's creation and forgiveness is freely granted, except to two

persons: One, a *kāfir* (disbeliever), and the other who harbours revenge against others.

In another Ḥadīth it is stated: "There are three people whose *ṣalāh* does not ascend even a span above their heads." Mentioned among these are those who quarrel among themselves.

In the above few paragraphs, I have digressed from the point under discussion. It was not my intention to mention all these *'aḥādīth* on quarrels or arguments. I merely did it to bring to your notice this great evil, which we ignore, so much so that even those whom we consider to be noble and righteous are guilty of it.

On the other hand, it must be noted that this quarrelling, use of harsh words and cutting oneself off from one another is a crime and evil in Islam, only when done out of enmity and hatred over worldly things and worldly causes. It is permitted to break off relations with someone because of his evil deeds or because of some religious matter (wherein he is in the wrong and blameable).

Ibn 'Umar ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} once quoted a saying of *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}, to which his son said something that outwardly appeared as an objection to it. The result was that Ibn 'Umar never again spoke to that son, as long as he lived. There are several similar incidents related of the *ṣaḥābah*.

In our own cases, Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise and He alone knows the true state of affairs, as to which relations are broken off because of *dīn* and which because of our own honour, pride and dignity having been hurt.

The second point to which the Ḥadīth under discussion draws attention is the fact that man should be satisfied with and accept gladly Allah's ruling in all matters. For example, even though it seems that the loss of the knowledge as to when *laylatal Qadr* actually falls is a great loss, yet it has to be accepted because it is from Allah.

Because of this, *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "It is better for us that way." One should ponder over this. Allah is at all times Merciful to His slaves. Even when someone becomes overtaken by a great punishment because of his own evil deeds, he needs only appeal to His Creator, admit his own weakness, and that same punishment is made the cause for greater good.

Our *'ulamā* have mentioned quite a few advantages in our not knowing the precise date for *laylatal qadr*. First, had we known the

actual location of this blessed night, there would have been many who would not have worshipped Allah at all during the other nights. As things are, one has to stay awake and be in prayers ([°]*ibādah*) for quite a number of nights, hoping that each night is perhaps the night. This means spending more night in Allah's worship and getting reward for these.

Secondly, there are among us those who are just not able to avoid evil. How extremely dangerous and unfortunate for them would it be, when, in spite of knowing that such and such a night is *laylatal qadr*, they might still spend it in sin and evil? Once the *nabi* ^{sallāhū 'alayhi wa sallam} on entering the mosque, saw one of the *ṣaḥābah* sleeping. He said to [°]Alī ^{radīyāhū 'anhu}: "Wake him up so that he can make *wuḍū'*."

This [°]Alī ^{radīyāhū 'anhu} did and then addressed the *nabi* ^{sallāhū 'alayhi wa sallam} thus: "O *rasūl* of Allah, ^{sallāhū 'alayhi wa sallam} you are always the first to hasten towards any good deed. Why then did you not wake him up yourself?" To this the *nabi* ^{sallāhū 'alayhi wa sallam} replied: "I feared lest this man may refuse and refusal to my command is *kufr*, denial of *dīn*. If he had refused your command, it would not be *kufr*."

Similarly, Allah in His *rahmah* does not wish that, in spite of knowing which night is the real one, a Muslim should still spend it in sin and evil.

Thirdly, if we did know and in spite of that, for one reason or another, within or outside our control, we allowed that night to go by without [°]*ibādah*, then it is very likely that thereafter, for the rest of *Ramaḍān*, no other night would have been spent in [°]*ibādah*, whereas now many people find it possible to spend one, two or three nights in [°]*ibādah* because we do not know which is the Night of Power.

Fourthly, every night spent in [°]*ibādah* in search of *laylatal qadr* is a night for which separate reward is promised.

Fifthly, we have read that Allah speaks highly to His *malā'ikah* about those believers who exert themselves in [°]*ibādah* during *Ramaḍān*. Now more such occasions of receiving Allah's appreciation arise. In spite of not knowing when the real night of *laylatal qadr* is and, although they have only a vague idea about its fixed time, still they exert themselves to the utmost in Allah's service, night after night. If such then is their exertion when *laylatal qadr* is not known, how much more will they exert themselves were it made known to them.

There are other advantages also. It is common knowledge that Allah often keeps certain things secret, as for example, the *al-ism al-A'zam* (the Great Name of Allah, whereby if we invoke upon Him, He answers). Similar is the case of that special moment on the day of *jumu'ah* when a Muslim's *du'as* are accepted; this time too is not known with complete certainty.

The third point to which attention is drawn in the Ḥadīth is the fact that *laylatal qadr* should be sought among three nights: The ninth, seventh and fifth. By reading this together with the other *'ahādīth*, we come to know that this refers to the last ten nights of *Ramaḍān*.

So to determine which nights are these, if we start from the 20th, counting upwards, then these three nights are the 25th, 27th and 29th. If, on the other hand, we start counting from the 29th backwards (where *Ramaḍān* has 29 days) these nights would be the 21st, 23rd and 25th, but if *Ramaḍān* has 30 days, then these would be the 22nd, 24th and 26th nights.

From the above, one can see how much uncertainty there is about the correct date, and in fact, among the learned *'ulamā*, there are approximately fifty different opinions. Because of this, some *'ulamā* have said *laylatal qadr* does not fall on one and the same night every year. If in this particular year, it falls on a particular night, then the following year it will fall on another night.

There are times when the *nabī* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} commanded the *ṣahābah* to search among a number of nights, whereas at other times he used to fix a certain night.

Abu Hurayrah ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} reports that once during a conversation with the *ṣahābah*, mention was made of *laylatal qadr*. *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} asked: "What is the date today?" They replied: "The 22nd of *Ramaḍān*." The *nabī* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "Search for *laylatal qadr* in the night following this day."

Abu Dharr ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} reports, "I inquired of the *nabī* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} whether *laylatal qadr* was only granted during the life time of *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} or whether it would continue to come after him. *Rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} replied: 'It will continue until the day of *qiyāmah*.' I then inquired: 'In which section of *Ramaḍān* does it come?' The *nabī* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} replied, 'Search for it in the first ten and in the last ten days.'"

"Thereafter the *nabī* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} became busy with other work, I

waited, and finding another chance inquired: 'In which section of those ten days *laylatal qadr* comes?' Upon this, *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallīllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} became angry with me, as he had never been before, and said: 'If it had been Allah's wish to make it known, would He not have informed us? Search for it among the last seven nights, and ask no more.'

In another Ḥadīth again, *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallīllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} is reported to have told one *ṣaḥābī* that *laylatal qadr* was on the 23rd night. Ibn 'Abbās ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} related: "While sleeping once, someone said to me in my dream: 'Rise up, this is *laylatal qadr*.' I woke up and proceeded in haste to *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallīllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} and I found him in *ṣalāh*. That was the 23rd night."

According to other reports again, the 24th was *laylatal qadr*. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} said: "Whoever remains all the nights of the year in prayer (*ibādah*) can find *laylatal qadr*. (In other words, the blessed night moves throughout the year and does not necessarily have to come in Ramaḍān only).

When this was mentioned to Ubayy ibn Ka'b ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} he said: "Yes, Ibn Mas'ūd's meaning is that people may not stay awake just on this night and become contented." Thereafter he swore by Allah that *laylatal qadr* comes on the 27th. This is also the view held by numerous *ṣaḥābah* as well as *tābi'in*.

What Ibn Mas'ūd and Ubayy ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} actually meant was that the person who remains in *ibādah* all the nights of the year will certainly realize when *laylatal qadr* is. Among the Imams, a well-known opinion of Imam Abū Ḥanīfah ^{rahmatullāh 'alayh} is that *laylatal qadr* moves throughout the year, while another view of his is that it moves about throughout the month of Ramaḍān.

His famous student-followers, Imam Muḥammad and Imam Abu Yūsuf, however, were of the opinion that the night is fixed on one specific night (which is unknown) during the Holy month of Ramaḍān, while the Shāfi'is believe that very likely it occurs on the 21st.

Imam Aḥmad and Imam Mālik ^{rahmatullāh 'alayhima} hold the view that it comes among the last ten nights of Ramaḍān, shifting from year to year and is not fixed. But the vast majority of the *ulamā*, consider it most likely that *laylatal qadr* comes annually on the 27th (of Ramaḍān).

Ibn 'Arabi ^{rahmatullāh 'alayh} says: "In my opinion, the view of those who

believe that *laylatal qadr* comes on various nights throughout the year is most likely correct, because twice I have seen it in *sha' bān*—once on the 15th and once on the 19th; and twice I have seen it in the middle ten nights of Ramaḍān—the 13th and the 18th. And I have seen it on every odd night of the last ten. For this reason, I am certain that it moves over all nights throughout the year, but comes mostly in Ramaḍān.”

Shāh Waliullāh of Delhi believed that *laylatal qadr* comes twice every year (a) One *laylatal qadr* is that one on which Allah's commands are revealed (to the *malā'ikah*); this is also the night on which the Holy Qur'ān was sent down from *al-lawḥ al-mahfūz* to the lower Heavens. This night does not come in Ramaḍān alone, but shifts and can come on any other night of the year. However, the particular night on which the Qur'ān was revealed fell in Ramaḍān.

(b) The second *laylatal qadr* is the one of tremendous spiritual value, when *malā'ikah* descend in large numbers, while *shayāṭīn* are held back, and when prayers are answered. This night comes only in Ramaḍān, during the various odd nights of the last ten days. (This view of Shāh Waliullāh used to be most acceptable to my father).

Anyway, whether there are two *laylatal qadr* or whether there is only one, the fact still remains that one has to search for it, if not throughout the year, then at least in Ramaḍān. Should that prove difficult, then at least during the last ten days. When that too seems a bit too much for us, then at least the odd-numbered nights of the last ten days. In case one has missed some of these too, then the 27th should not be allowed to go by.

Thus, if by good fortune one is blessed with finding the night, then it would outweigh all comforts and enjoyable things in the world. Even if one fails to get the much-searched-for night, then at least the reward for the worship (*ibādah*) is received. At least efforts should be made that the *ṣalāḥ* of *maghrib* and *ishā* throughout the year is performed with *jamā'ah* because if it is *laylatal qadr* the reward for both is so much more.

It is a great blessing of Allah that when one makes an effort for religious aims and cannot meet with success, he is still rewarded for the efforts. But in spite of this, how few are those who would make every effort in the service of *dīn*? On the other hand, in worldly affairs when one's efforts do not bear fruit, then these efforts are

written off as a loss. In spite of this, numerous people continue to spend their time, efforts and wealth in worldly pursuits that are fruitless and without worthwhile purpose, and do not hold forth any such sure reward.

Hadith 6. Signs of *Laylat al-Qadr*

U**ḅ**ādah ibn Sāmit ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} reports that he asked *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} about *laylatal qadr*. He replied: "It is in Ramaḍān, during the last ten days, on the unevenly numbered nights, either the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th or the last night of Ramaḍān. Whosoever stands in glo^ḥibādah on this night, with sincere faith and with genuine hopes of gaining reward, his previous sins will be forgiven. Among the signs of this night is that it is a serene, quiet, shining night, neither hot, nor cold but temperate as if a moon is shining clear, and no meteors are shot at the *shayātīn* on that night. It lasts until the break of the dawn. Another sign is that at morn, the sun rises without any radiant beams of light, appearing rather like the moon in its fullness. On that day, Allah prohibits the *shayātīn* from rising up with the sun."

عَنْ عُبَادَةَ ابْنِ الصَّامِتِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ فَقَالَ فِي رَمَضَانَ فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَوْخِرِ فَأَيُّهَا فِي لَيْلَةٍ وَتَرَى فِي إِحْدَى وَ عِشْرِينَ أَوْ ثَلَاثٍ وَ عِشْرِينَ أَوْ خَمْسٍ وَ عِشْرِينَ أَوْ سَبْعٍ وَ عِشْرِينَ أَوْ تِسْعٍ وَ عِشْرِينَ أَوْ آخِرَ لَيْلَةٍ مَن رَمَضَانَ مَن قَامَهَا إِيمَانًا وَ احْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَ مِنْ أَمَارَتِهَا أَنَّهَا لَيْلَةٌ بَلَكَجَةٌ صَافِيَةٌ سَاجِنَةٌ سَاجِيَةٌ لَا حَارَّةٌ وَ لَا بَارِدَةٌ كَأَنَّ فِيهَا قَمَرًا سَاطِعًا وَ لَا يَحِلُّ لِنَجْمٍ أَنْ يُرْمَى بِهِ تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةَ حَتَّى الصَّبَاحِ وَ مِنْ أَمَارَتِهَا أَنَّ الشَّمْسَ تَطْلُعُ صَبِيحَتِهَا لَا شُعَاعَ لَهَا مُسْتَوِيَةً كَأَنَّهَا الْقَمَرُ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ وَ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الشَّيْطَانِ أَنْ يَخْرُجَ مَعَهَا يَوْمَئِذٍ

در مشور عن أحمد و البيهقي و محمد ابن نصر و غيم

Note: Part of what has been mentioned in this Ḥadīth has already been dealt with. Some signs are here mentioned about the actual night. These signs are clear and need no further explanation. Apart from these, there are other signs too, as mentioned in the *'ahādīth* or in the experiences of those who had the good fortune to experience *laylatal qadr*.

The sign that is, however, most specific in the Ḥadīth is the rising of the sun, without any radiant beams of light. Other signs are not always there. One *ṣaḥābī* °Abdah ibn Abi Lubāba ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} says: "On the evening of the 27th, I tasted the water of the sea and it was sweet." Ayyūb ibn Khālīd said: "I once had to bathe myself with sea water, and on tasting it, found it sweet. This was on the 23rd night."

Some of the *mashāyikh* (religious divines) wrote that on the evening of *laylatal qadr*, everything prostrates itself before Allah, so much so that trees fall flat on the ground, then return to their normal position; these are however spiritual phenomena not visible to the ordinary person.

Hadith 7. What One Should Pray For in *Laylatal Qadr*

°Ā'ishah ^{radīyallāhu 'anḥā} reports: "I said: 'O *rasūl* of Allah ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}, should I find myself the *laylatal qadr*, what shall I ask of Allah? *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} replied, 'Say, "O Allah, Thou art the One who grants pardon for sins. Thou lovest to pardon, so pardon me." "'

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ عَلِمْتُ أَنِّي لَيْلَةُ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ مَا أَقُولُ فِيهَا قَالَ قُولِي أَللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوفٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي
رواه أحمد و ابن ماجه و الترمذي و صححه كذا في المشكوة

Note: This is indeed such an all-inclusive prayer, wherein one begs that Allah in His infinite Kindness should forgive his sins. If that has been obtained, the path to the *ākhirah* is secure. What more would one require? Imam Sufyān al-Thawrī use to say that to keep oneself busy on this night with *du'ā* (invocations to Allah) is better than any other form of worship (*°ibādah*).

Ibn Rajab says that one should not only remain busy with *du'ā* but should also take part in all other forms of glo[°]*ibādah*, e.g. recitation of the Qur'ān, *ṣalāh*, meditation etc. This latter opinion is most correct and nearer to what *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} has said, as already mentioned in the previous *'aḥādīth*.

Chapter 3. *I'tikāf (Seclusion in the Masjid)*

The meaning of *i'takāf* is to seclude oneself in the mosque, with the express intention (*niyyah*) of *i'takāf*. According to the *ḥanafī* school of thought, this may be of three different types:

a. *Wājib i'takāf* (Obligatory 'I'tikāf'): *I'takāf* becomes compulsory when a person makes it obligatory upon himself. For example, when a person makes a vow to Allah that if Allah fulfills a certain wish of his, he shall perform so many days *i'takāf*; in this case, the moment his wish is fulfilled, the *i'takāf* becomes compulsory (*wājib*). Or a person may just make an unconditional vow, whereby he makes *i'takāf wājib* upon himself for a certain number of days. This becomes obligatory for him from that moment onwards.

b. *Sunnah i'takāf*: This was the general practice of the *nabī* ﷺ. It means to seclude oneself inside the *masjid* for the last ten days of *Ramaḍān*.

c. *Nafl i'takāf*: For the third category i.e. *nafl i'takāf*, no special time and no specific number of days are fixed. A person may make a *niyyah* (intention) for any number of days at any time, even for his whole life. While Imam Abu Ḥanīfah states that *i'takāf* must be for not less than a full day, Imam Muḥammad states that there is no limit as to the minimum period of time. The *fatwā* ruling confirms this latter view.

Therefore it is desirable for any one entering a *masjid* to make the *niyyah* (intention) of *i'takāf* for the period that he will remain in the *masjid* so that, while he is in *'ibādah* he also earns the reward of *i'takāf*.

Part A. Objects of *I'tikāf* and its Advantages

In view of the above, it is advisable that everyone entering the *masjid* to join the congregational prayer should, on entering *masjid*, make the *niyyah* for *i'tikāf*; in that case it means that as long he remains busy with *ṣalāh*, *dhikr*, listening to lectures or sermons, he also receives reward for the *i'takāf*.

I always observed that my late father used to make *niyyah* for *i'takāf* whenever he entered the *masjid*. Occasionally, by way of teaching and reminding his followers, he would raise his voice when reciting the words for *niyyah*. The reward for *i'takāf* is great as indicated by the fact that the *nabī* ﷺ always used to perform *i'takāf*.

The example of one who resides in the *masjid* in *itakāf* is that of a person who, having gone to a certain place to appeal for something, remains there until it is granted. When someone comes begging at our door and then refuses to leave until he has been granted his request, I am sure that even a person with the hardest heart amongst us will eventually agree to his request.

Allah is much more Merciful, and when someone persistently sits at His door, what doubt can there be in the fulfillment of his wishes. 'Allāmah ibn Qayyim, in explaining the significance of *Itikāf* writes that the actual aim is 'to turn the heart away from everything except Allah, and to make it come near to Allah, thereby forming a complete spiritual connection with the Creator.

All worldly connections are thus cut off, for the sake of gaining Allah's attention and all our thoughts, desires, love and devotion become centered around Him. As a result, an attachment with Allah is attained—a love and friendship that will be the only support in the loneliness of the grave. One can possibly imagine the great joy with which that time in the grave will be spent.

In **Marāqī al-Falāh** the author writes that *itakāf*, when properly and sincerely performed, is among the most virtuous deeds. One cannot possibly enumerate all the great advantages and benefits in it. In actual fact, what takes place in *itakāf* is that the heart is drawn away from everything else except the Creator, while the soul is actually laid at His door-step.

All the time, one remains in a state of *ibādah*; even when one is asleep, one is still in His worship, striving for nearness to Him. And Allah says (according to a Ḥadīth): "Whoever draws near to Me (the length of) one hand, then I draw nearer to him (the length of) two hands, and whoever draws near to Me by walking, I draw nearer to him by running." Moreover, in *itakāf* one seeks refuge in the house of Allah, and is safe therein from all enemies.

Part B. Where to Perform *Itikāf*

The best of place for *itakāf* is the *masjid al-ḥarām* in Makkah. The next best is the *masjid an-Nabī* in Madinah and the next best is *bayt al-maqdis*. Thereafter, comes the *jumu'ah masjid* in one's own town, and last but not least, the *masjid* nearest to one's home.

Imam Abu Ḥanīfah ^{rahmatullāh 'alayh} stipulates that the *masjid* should be one wherein the five daily prayers are regularly performed, while

Imam Abu Yūsuf and Imam Muḥammad agree that any *masjid* acceptable to the *shari'ah* can be entered for *i'takāf*.

The above applies to the males. As for the females, they should perform *i'takāf* in the prayer room set aside in their homes. Where, however, no such demarcated place exists, any one room or part of the house should be set aside for this purpose.

I'takāf is thus in fact an easier task for women. The domestic duties can be performed by daughters or servants under her supervision, and the woman in *i'takāf* while remaining in a section of her own house, is spiritually rewarded for it. It is so very unfortunate that, in spite of this relative facility, our women-folk still remain deprived of the blessings of *i'takāf*.

Part C. *Aḥādīth* About *I'tikāf*

Hadith 1. The *I'tikāf* of the *nabi* sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam

Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī radīyallahu 'anhu reports that *rasūlullāh* sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam once performed *i'takāf* in a tent (inside the *masjid*) for the first ten days of Ramadān. Thereafter, he extended it to the middle ten days. Thereafter, he put his head out of the tent and said: "Verily in search of *laylatal qadr* did I perform *i'takāf* for the first ten days and extended it to the next ten days for the same purpose. Then I was told that this night is in the last ten days, so those with me in *i'takāf* should also continue. I had indeed been shown that night and then made to forget which one it shall be. And verily did I see myself prostrating to Allah with my forehead in mud on the morning after that night, Therefore,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اعْتَكَفَ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوَّلَ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ ثُمَّ اعْتَكَفَ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوْسَطَ فِي قُبَّةِ تَرْكِيَّةٍ ثُمَّ أَطْلَعَ رَأْسَهُ فَقَالَ إِنِّي اعْتَكَفْتُ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوَّلَ أَلْتَمِسُ هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةَ ثُمَّ اعْتَكَفْتُ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوْسَطَ ثُمَّ أُتَيْتُ فَقِيلَ لِي إِنَّهَا فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَّخِرِ فَمَنْ كَانَ اعْتَكَفَ مَعِيَ فَلْيَعْتَكِفِ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوَّخِرَ فَقَدْ أُرِيتُ هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةَ ثُمَّ أَنْسَيْتُهَا وَقَدْ رَأَيْتُنِي أَسْجُدُ فِي مَاءٍ وَ طِينٍ مِنْ صَبِيحَتِهَا فَالْتَمِسُوهَا فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَّخِرِ وَ التَّمِسُوا فِي كُلِّ وَتَرٍ قَالَ فَطَطَّرَتِ السَّمَاءُ تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةَ وَ كَانَ الْمَسْجِدُ عَلَى عَرِيشٍ فَوَكَّفَ الْمَسْجِدُ فَبَصُرْتُ عَيْنَايَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَ عَلَى جَبْهَتِهِ أَثَرُ الْمَاءِ وَ الطِّينِ مِنْ صَبِيحَةٍ

seek *laylatal qadr* among the last ten nights of Ramaḍān: Seek it among the odd ones." Abu

Sa'īd ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} says: "That same night it rained. The roof of the *masjid* leaked, and I saw *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} performing *sajdah* (prostration) in muddy clay, and that was the morning of the 21st night."

إِحْدَى وَعِشْرِينَ
مشكوة عن المتفق عليه باختلاف اللفظ

Note: It used to be the general practice of *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} to perform *i'takāf* in Ramaḍān. At times he used to remain in the mosque for the whole month and, during the last year of his life, he was in *i'takāf* for twenty days. Because he usually secluded himself in the *masjid* for the last ten days of Ramaḍān, the *ulamā* consider it *sunnah muakkadah* to perform *i'takāf* for that period.

From the above Ḥadīth, it can be deduced that the major object behind *i'takāf* was to search for *laylatal qadr*. What better manner can there be for this search than to remain in *ibādah* all the time, as in *i'takāf* whether one is awake or asleep. Furthermore, in *i'takāf* one is free from all daily tasks and thus has all his time free for *dhikr allāh* (the remembrance of Allah) and meditation.

Throughout Ramaḍān, *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} remained in *ibādah* and particularly when the last ten days came along, he set no limit in exerting himself. He himself remained awake throughout the night and set the example of waking up his family for the same purpose.

Ā'ishah ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} reports: "During the last ten days of Ramaḍān, *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} tied his *lungi* (trouser-cloth) tightly about him, staying awake all night, and waking his family (for the purpose of *ibādah*)." "Tied his *lungi* tightly about him" could mean either that he set no limits in exerting himself in *ibādah*, or that he completely avoided all forms of sexual contact with his wives.

Hadith 2. The Person Doing *i'takāf* Avoids Sin and Gets the Same Reward as Those Who Do Righteous Deeds

Ibn 'Abbās ^{radīyallāhu 'anhu} relates that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said: "The person performing *i'takāf* remains free from sins,* and he is

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ فِي الْمُعْتَكِفِ

indeed given the same reward as for those who do righteous deeds (in spite of not having done these deeds) as a result of having been secluded in the *masjid*."

هُوَ يَعْتَكِفُ الذُّنُوبَ وَ يُجْزَى لَهُ مِنَ
الْحَسَنَاتِ كَمَا مِلَ الْحَسَنَاتِ كُلِّهَا
مشكوة عن ابن ماجه

(Note that one remaining in *ʿtikāf* in the *masjid* is not allowed to go out from there for worldly needs. He may only go outside for the call of nature, to perform ablution or bath or for attending *jumuʿah* when that is not performed in the same *masjid*, after which he must return forthwith.)

Note: Now this Ḥadīth points to two great benefits of *ʿtikāf*. First, one avoids sin. The world all around us is full of temptations and very often one falls into sin without even intending to do so. To commit sin in the blessed (full of *barakah*) month of Ramaḍān is indeed a great injury to ourselves. Through remaining in *ʿtikāf* in the *masjid*, one completely avoids the temptation to sin.

Secondly, It would appear outwardly that, when one is secluded in the *masjid*, one is apparently at a disadvantage by not being able to perform certain good deeds like joining in funeral prayers, attending burials, visiting the sick, etc. Therefore, according to this Ḥadīth, one is rewarded for these deeds even though he is not performing them.

What a great favour from Allah! How great is Allah's bounty! If only we could understand and properly appreciate these favours, which can attract the *rahmah* of Allah, but we are very neglectful of this and place little value for *dīn* in our hearts.

Hadith 3. *ʿtikāf* Takes One Far Away From *Jahannam*

Ibn ʿAbbās radīyallāhu ʿanhumā reports that, while he was once in *ʿtikāf* in *masjid al-nabī* (the Prophet's mosque), a certain man came to him, greeted him and sat down. Ibn ʿAbbās said to him, "I see that you seem sad and troubled." The man replied: "Yes, O son of

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ
مُعْتَكِفًا فِي مَسْجِدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَتَاهُ رَجُلٌ فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ جَلَسَ
فَقَالَ لَهُ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ يَا فُلَانُ أَرَأَيْتَ مُكْتَنِبًا
حَرِينًا قَالَ نَعَمْ يَا ابْنَ عَمِّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ لِفُلَانٍ

the uncle of *rasūlullāh* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam}, I am indeed troubled in that I have an obligation to fulfil towards someone. I swear by the holiness of the inmate of this honoured resting-place (*rasūlullāh ṣallal-lāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam*'s grave) that I am not able to fulfil this obligation." Ibn 'Abbās inquired: "Shall I intercede with that person on your behalf?" The man replied "By all means, if you so wish," Ibn 'Abbās put on his shoes and went out of the mosque. The man, seeing this, said: "Have you then forgotten that you are in *i'takāf*? Tears filling his eyes, Ibn 'Abbās replied: "No, but the occasion is still fresh in my mind when I heard the esteemed inmate of this tomb say: 'Whoever sets forth in the way of settling a necessary affair on behalf of his brother, that service shall be better for him than to perform *i'tikāf* for ten years, and whosoever performs *i'takāf* for a day (thereby seeking the pleasure of Allah), Allah will spread three trenches between him and the fire of *jahannam*, the width of each trench being greater than the distance between Heaven and the Earth.'"

Note: Two things are clear from this Ḥadīth. In the first place, we are told that by way of reward for one day's *i'takāf*, Allah spreads three trenches between him and the fire of *jahannam*, the width of which equals the distance between the Heaven and the Earth. In **Kashf al-Ghummaḥ**, 'Allāmah al-Sha'rānī relates a Ḥadīth wherein the *nabī* ^{ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa ṣallam} said: "Whoever performs *i'takāf* for the final ten days of Ramaḍān, for him is the reward of two *ḥajj* and two *ʿumrah*s, and whoever performs *i'takāf* from *maghrib* until *ishā*, doing nothing except performing *ṣalāh* and reciting the Qur'ān, Allah will build a palace for him in *jannah*."

عَلَيَّ حَقٌّ وَلَا وَحُرْمَةِ صَاحِبِ هَذَا الْقَبْرِ
مَا أَقْدَرُ عَلَيْهِ قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ أَفَلَا أُكَلِّمُهُ فِيكَ
قَالَ إِنْ أَحْبَبْتَ قَالَ فَاتَّعَلَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ ثُمَّ
خَرَجَ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ قَالَ لَهُ الرَّجُلُ أَنْسَيْتَ مَا
كُنْتُ فِيهِ قَالَ لَا وَ لِكَيْتِي سَمِعْتُ صَاحِبَ
هَذَا الْقَبْرِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَالْعَهْدُ بِهِ
قَرِيبٌ قَدَّمَعْتَ عَيْنَاهُ وَ هُوَ يَقُولُ مَنْ مَشَى
فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ وَ بَلَغَ فِيهَا كَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ مِنْ
اعْتِكَافٍ عَشْرِ سِنِينَ وَ مَنْ اعْتِكَفَ يَوْمًا
ابْتِغَاءً وَجِبِ اللَّهُ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ النَّارِ
ثَلَاثَ خَنَادِقَ أَبْعَدَ مِمَّا بَيْنَ الْحَافِقِينَ

رواه الطبراني في الأوسط والبيهقي واللفظ له والحاكم
مختصراً وقال صحيح الإسناد وكذا في الترغيب وقال
الطيبي في الدرر صححه الحاكم و. دغفه البيهقي

In the second place, we are told that performing a service for one's brother brings a reward greater than ten years of *i'takāf*. For this reason, Ibn^c Abbās ^{radiyallāhu 'anhu} broke off his *i'takāf*. It was of course possible for him to continue it afterwards. The *ṣūfīs* say that Allah has such regard for very few things as He has for a broken heart.

It is for this reason that we have been so much warned of the appeals to Allah of that person whose heart has been hurt through any unjust treatment or punishment. Whenever the *nabi* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} appointed anyone as a governor, in addition to advising him, he would also warn him to beware of the du'ā (to Allah) of the persecuted.

Note that *i'takāf* terminates when one leaves the mosque even for a task on behalf of a fellow Muslim. When that *i'takāf* is *wājib*, it will mean that it has to be performed all over again. *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} never left the mosque during *i'takāf*, except for the calls of nature and *wuḍū'*. As for Ibn^c Abbās ^{radiyallāhu 'anhu} leaving the mosque to do some favour to a friend, it was in the spirit that is reminiscent of the soldier at the point of death in the battle-field of Yarmouk, refusing to drink water until his wounded comrade had been given the drink. On the other hand, it is quite possible that Ibn^c Abbās ^{radiyallāhu 'anhu} was performing *nafl i'takāf*, in which case it was permissible for him to break it off.

I now quote a lengthy Ḥadīth, in which many virtues are mentioned, and with this I conclude this book.

Hadith 4. Concluding Ḥadīth on the *Faḍā'il* of Ramaḍān

Ibn^c Abbās ^{radiyallāhu 'anhu} says that he heard the *nabi* ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} say, *jannah* is made fragrant with the sweetest perfumes in Ramaḍān. From the very beginning of the year till the end, it is brightly decorated for this month.

And when the first night of Ramaḍān appears, a wind blows from beneath the *arsh* (Throne). It is called *muthīrah* and causes the leaves of the trees

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ تُتَبَخَّرُ وَ تُزَيَّنُ مِنَ الْحَوْلِ إِلَى الْحَوْلِ لِدُخُولِ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ فَإِذَا كَانَتْ أَوَّلُ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ هَبَّتْ رِيحٌ مِنْ تَحْتِ الْعَرْشِ يُقَالُ لَهَا الْمُثِيرَةُ فَتُصَفَّقُ وَرَقَ أَشْجَارِ الْجَنَّةِ وَ حَلَقَ الْمَصَارِيحَ فَيَسْمَعُ لِذَلِكَ طِينٌ لَمْ يَسْمَعْ السَّامِعُونَ أَحْسَنَ مِنْهُ

of *jannah* to rustle and door handles to vibrate, thus giving forth such a melodious sound as had never been heard before.

The large eyed damsels (houris) of *jannah* then step forth till they appear in the centre of the balconies of *jannah*, exclaiming, "Is there anyone praying to Allah for us that Allah may join us in marriage with him?" Then these damsels (houris) call out: "O Ridwān (keeper of *jannah*), what night is this?" He replies: "Labbayk! It is indeed the first night of Ramadān, when the doors of *jannah* are opened to those who observe the fast from among the *ummaḥ* of Muḥammad ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}

Rasūlullāh ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} further said: "Allah says, 'O Ridwān open the doors of *jannah* and O Mālik (keeper of *jahannam*), close the doors of *jahannam* for those who fast from among the *ummaḥ* of Aḥmad ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}. O Jibra'il, proceed down to the Earth and bind all the rebellious *shayāṭīn*, put them in chains, cast them in the oceans, so that they make no mischief, to spoil the fast of the *ummaḥ* of My beloved Muḥammad ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}.

"Allah commands a herald from the heavens to call out three times on each one of the nights of

فَتَبَرَزُ الْحُورُ الْعَيْنَ حَتَّى يَقْفَنَ بَيْنَ شَرَفِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَنَادِينَ هَلْ مِنْ خَاطِبٍ إِلَى اللَّهِ فَيَرْوِجُهُ ثُمَّ يَقْلَنَ الْحُورُ الْعَيْنُ يَا رِضْوَانَ الْجَنَّةِ مَا هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةُ فَيُجِيبُهُنَّ بِالثَّلَاثَةِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ هَذِهِ أَوَّلُ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ فَتُفْتَحُ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ لِلصَّائِمِينَ مِنْ أُمَّةِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَا رِضْوَانَ افْتَحْ أَبْوَابَ الْجَنَّةِ وَ يَا مَالِكَ اغْلِقْ أَبْوَابَ الْجَهَنَّمَ عَنِ الصَّائِمِينَ مِنْ أُمَّةِ أَحْمَدَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَ يَا جِبْرَائِيلُ اهْبِطْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ فَاصْفِدْ مَرَدَّةَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَ غَلِّمْهُم بِالْأَغْلَالِ ثُمَّ اقْدِفْهُمْ فِي الْبِحَارِ حَتَّى لَا يَفْسِدُوا عَلَى أُمَّةِ مُحَمَّدٍ حَبِيبِي صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صِيَامَهُمْ قَالَ وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ لِمُنَادٍ يُنَادِي ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ هَلْ مِنْ سَائِلٍ فَأَعْطِيَهُ سُوءَهُ هَلْ مِنْ تَائِبٍ فَأَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِ هَلْ مِنْ مُسْتَغْفِرٍ فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ مَنْ يُقْرِضُ الْمَلِيَّ غَيْرَ الْعَدُوْمِ وَ الْوَفِيِّ غَيْرَ الظُّلُومِ قَالَ وَ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ عِنْدَ الْإِفْطَارِ أَلْفُ أَلْفِ عَتِيقٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ كُلُّهُمْ قَدِ اسْتَوْجَبُوا النَّارَ فَإِذَا كَانَ آخِرُ يَوْمٍ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ أَعْتَقَ اللَّهُ فِي ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ بِقَدْرِ مَا أَعْتَقَ مِنْ أَوَّلِ الشَّهْرِ إِلَى آخِرِهِ وَ إِذَا كَانَتْ

Ramaḍān: 'Is there anyone begging of Me that I may grant him his desire? Is there anyone repenting to Me that I may turn in mercy *rahmah* to him? Is there anyone begging My forgiveness that I may forgive him? Who is there who shall give a loan to the One Whose wealth does not diminish, and the One Who duly pays back without any deductions?'"

Rasūlullāh ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said further: "Every day at the time of *iftār* Allah sets free one million such souls from the fire of *jahannam* who had previously been found to deserve *jahannam*. On the last night, He sets free as many more as had been set free throughout the month."

"On the night of *laylatal qadr*, Allah commands Jibra'il to descend to the earth with a large group of *malā'ikah*. They descend carrying a green flag, which is then planted on top of the *ka'bah*. Jibra'il ^{'alayhi salām} himself has one hundred wings, two of which are spread out on this night only."

"He spreads out these two wings so that their width extends from east to west. Jibra'il ^{'alayhi salām} then sends out the *malā'ikah* in all directions to offer salutation to anybody they find standing

لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ يَا مُرُّ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ جِبْرَائِيلَ
فَتَهْبِطُ فِي كِبْكَبَةٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَمَعَهُمْ لُؤَاءٌ
أَخْضَرُ فَيُرْكُزُ اللَّوَاءُ عَلَى ظَهْرِ الْكَعْبَةِ وَ لَهُ
مِئَةٌ جَنَاحٍ مِنْهَا جَنَاحَانِ لَا يَنْشُرُهُمَا إِلَّا فِي
تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةِ فَيَنْشُرُهُمَا فِي تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةِ فَيَجَاوِرُ
الْمَشْرِقَ إِلَى الْمَغْرِبِ فَيُحِثُّ جِبْرَائِيلُ عَلَيْهِ
السَّلَامُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ فِي هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ فَيَسَلُّمُونَ
عَلَى كُلِّ قَائِمٍ وَ قَاعِدٍ وَ مُصَلٍّ وَ ذَاكِرٍ وَ
يُصَلُّونَهُمْ وَ يُؤْمِنُونَ عَلَى دُعَائِهِمْ حَتَّى
يَطْلُعَ الْفَجْرُ فَإِذَا طَلَعَ الْفَجْرُ يُنَادِي
جِبْرَائِيلُ مَعَاشِرَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ الرَّحِيلِ الرَّحِيلِ
فَيَقُولُونَ يَا جِبْرَائِيلُ فَمَا صَنَعَ اللَّهُ فِي
حَوَائِجِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَحْمَدَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ فَيَهْتُولُ نَظَرَ اللَّهِ إِلَيْهِمْ فِي هَذِهِ
اللَّيْلَةِ فَعَفَى عَنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَرْبَعَةً فَقُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ مَنْ هُمْ قَالَ رَجُلٌ مُدْمِنٌ خَمْرٍ وَ عَاقٌ
لِوَالِدَيْهِ وَ قَاطِعٌ رَحِمٍ وَ مُشَعِّنٌ قُلْنَا يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْمُشَعِّنُ قَالَ هُوَ الْمُصَارِمُ
فَإِذَا كَانَتْ لَيْلَةُ الْفِطْرِ سُمِّيَتْ تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةُ لَيْلَةُ
الْجَائِزَةِ فَإِذَا كَانَتْ عَدَاةُ الْفِطْرِ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ
وَ جَلَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ فِي كُلِّ بِلَادٍ فَيَهْبِطُونَ إِلَى
الْأَرْضِ فَيَقُومُونَ عَلَى أَفْوَاهِ السِّكِّهِ
فَيَنَادُونَ بِصَوْتٍ يَسْمَعُ مَنْ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ
جَلَّ إِلَّا الْجِنَّ وَ الْإِنْسَ فَيَقُولُونَ يَا أُمَّةَ
مُحَمَّدٍ اخْرُجُوا إِلَى رَبِّ كَرِيمٍ يُعْطِي

in prayer or sitting, performing *ṣalāh* celebrating the praises of Allah. They shake hands with them and say *āmīn* to all their prayers (Du'ās) until dawn."

"When dawn comes, Jibra'īl ^{'alayhis salām} calls out: 'Depart *malā'ikah* of Allah, depart.' The *malā'ikah* then inquire: 'O Jibrail what did Allah do regarding the needs that the faithful ones from among the *ummah* of Aḥmad ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} put before Him?' Jibra'īl ^{'alayhis salām} replies: 'Allah looked at them with mercy *raḥmah* and pardoned them all, except four kinds of people.'

Thereupon, we the *ṣaḥābah* inquired: "Who are they, O, *rasūl-ullāh*?" *Rasūlullāh* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} replied: "They are the ones who are addicted to wine, those disobedient to their parents, those who cut themselves off from their near relatives, and those who harbour ill-will against their fellow beings and break off relations with them."

And then the night of *īd al-ḥajj*, the night that is called *laylat al-jā'izah* (the night of reward), comes along. On the morning of *īd*, Allah sends down the *malā'ikah* to all the lands of the

Earth, where they take their positions on all the streets and lanes, calling out with a voice that is heard by all except men and *jinn*: "O *ummah* of Muḥammad, ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} come forth from your houses towards the Sustainer, Who is Noble and Gracious; Who grants abundantly

الْجَزِيلَ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ الْعَظِيمِ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا إِلَى مُصَلَّاهُمْ فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ مَا جَزَاءُ الْأَجِيرِ إِذَا عَمِلَ عَمَلَهُ قَالَ فَيَقُولُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنْ هَذَا وَسَيِّدَنَا جَزَاؤُهُ أَنْ تُؤْفِيَهُ أَجْرَهُ قَالَ فَيَقُولُ فَإِنِّي أَشْهَدُكُمْ يَا مَلَائِكَتِي أَنِّي قَدْ جَعَلْتُ ثَوَابَهُمْ مِنْ صِيَامِهِمْ شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ وَ قِيَامِهِمْ رِضَائِي وَ مَغْفِرَتِي وَ يَقُولُ يَا عِبَادِي سَلُونِي فَوَعِزَّتِي وَ جَلَالِي لَا تَسْأَلُونِي الْيَوْمَ شَيْئًا فِي جَمْعِكُمْ لِأَخْرَجْتِكُمْ إِلَّا أَعْطَيْتُكُمْ وَ لَا لِدُنْيَاكُمْ إِلَّا نَظَرْتُ لَكُمْ فَوَعِزَّتِي لِأَسْتَدَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَاتِكُمْ مَا رَاقَبْتُمُونِي وَ عِزَّتِي وَ جَلَالِي لَا أَخْرِيكُمْ وَ لَا أَفْضَحُكُمْ بَيْنَ أَصْحَابِ الْخُدُودِ وَ انصَرَفُوا مَغْفُورًا لَكُمْ قَدْ أَرْضَيْتُمُونِي وَ رَضِيْتُ عَنْكُمْ فَتَفْرَحُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَ تَسْتَبِشِرُ بِمَا يُعْطِي اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةَ إِذَا أَفْطَرُوا مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ

كذا في الترغيب و قال رواه أبو الشيخ ابن حبان في كتاب الثواب و البيهقي و اللفظ له و ليس في إسناده من أجمع على ضعفه قلت قال الشوتوبي في التدريب قد التزم البيهقي أن لا يخرج في تصانيفه حديثا يعلمه موضوعا أخ و ذكر القاري في المرقاة بعض طرق الحديث ثم قال باختلاف طرق الحديث يدل على أن له أصلا

and pardons the major sins."

When they proceed for their *ʿīd ṣalāh*, Allah says to the *malā'ikah*: "What indeed is the reward of that employee who has rendered full service?" The *malā'ikah* reply: "O our Sustainer and Master, it is only right that he shall receive his reward in full for his services."

Allah then says: "I call you to witness, O My *malā'ikah*, that for their having fasted for Me during the month of Ramaḍān, and for their having stood before Me in prayer by night, I have granted to them as a reward My pleasure and have granted them forgiveness. O My slaves, ask now of Me, for I swear by My Honour and Greatness, that whatsoever you shall beg of Me this day in this assembly of yours, for the needs of your *ākhirah* shall grant you, and whatever you shall ask for your worldly needs, I shall grant what is to your advantage. By My Honour, I swear, as long as you shall obey My commands, I shall cover up your faults. By My Honour and My Greatness, I swear, that I shall never disgrace you in front of the transgressors and disbelievers. Return now from here, you are forgiven. You have indeed pleased Me, and I am pleased with you."

The *malā'ikah*, on seeing this great reward bestowed upon the *ummah* of Muḥammad sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam on the day of *ʿīd*, become greatly pleased and happy. (O Allah, make us also among those fortunate ones. *Aāmin*).

Note: The previous pages of this book have already dealt with most of what is contained in this long Ḥadīth. A few points need further attention. We see here that there are a few people who are deprived of the general forgiveness in Ramaḍān and are unfortunate indeed in not being able to get a share of this even on the morning of *ʿīd*.

Among them are those who fight and quarrel among themselves and those disobedient to their parents. One may well ask them: "You have displeased Allah, and having done so, what other refuge do you now have? We feel indeed sad that, for some worldly gain or honour, you have made yourselves the target for the curse of *rasūlullāh* sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam and Jibra'īl, while at the same time being excluded from Allah's generous forgiveness. You may have gained a temporary victory over your enemy and gained some worldly honour, but this short-lived gain will avail nothing when *rasūlullāh ṣallal-lāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*'s curse is on you, confirmed by Jibra'īl, and you are being refused Allah's forgiveness and *rahmah*."

I beg you, my dear brothers and sisters, think about your position at this moment and refrain from all your quarrels. There is still time to rectify and repent today. Tomorrow you shall have to stand before a Judge, before Whom no rank, no honour, position or wealth shall benefit you—a judge before Whom only your actions shall count and Who is aware of each and every movement.

Remember that Allah may forgive our mistakes as far as our relationship with Him is concerned, but will not forgive, without equivalent penalty, the disobedience in our relations with our fellow-men.

Rasūlullāh ^{sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} said, "The poorest one from among my *ummah* is that person, who shall appear on the day of *qiyāmah* bringing with him righteous deeds like *ṣalāh*, *ṣawm* (fast) and charity, but he had also sworn at someone, falsely accused someone else, and hurt someone, with the result that all these people shall come forward with complaints against him, bearing witness against him.

As a penalty, his good deeds shall be taken away and given to the claimants. And when his good deeds are exhausted in this manner, their sins shall be loaded upon him (when he is not able to pay the full penalty through lack of good deeds); because of this load he shall then enter *jahannam*." So we see that, in spite of many good deeds, he shall be in great despair (O Allah, save us from that).

Another point is worth mentioning in this connection. In these pages we have mentioned various occasions and matters through which forgiveness comes. A question may arise that, when forgiveness is being granted, why should it be granted time and again. In other words, once a person was forgiven, there are no sins left on him. So why is forgiveness granted again and again?

The answer to this is that when forgiveness is granted to a person with a load of sins upon him, those sins are wiped away, but if he has no sins, then instead Allah's *rahmah* and reward descend upon him.

A further interesting point to note is that Allah repeatedly calls the *malā'ikah* to bear witness to His granting forgiveness. The reason is that the conduct of affairs at the time of reckoning in *qiyāmah* has been so laid down that witness shall be brought forward to testify. Hence the *anbiyā'* shall be required to bring witnesses as

to whether they had delivered the message. Accordingly, very often our *nabi* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} used to say certainly you shall be asked about me (and my mission); so bear witness that I did deliver the message.

In the **Ṣaḥīḥ** of Bukhari we read a Ḥadīth, "On the day of *qiyāmah* Nūḥ ^{'alayhis salām} shall be called and asked: "Did you deliver the message in the proper manner?" He shall reply, "Yes I did." Then his *ummah* shall be asked: "Did he deliver My commandments?" "They shall reply: مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ" "No, neither did a bringer of glad tidings come to us, nor a warner' (*al-mā'idah* 19)."

"There upon Nūḥ ^{'alayhis salām} shall be asked to bring a witness. He shall call upon the *ummah* of Muḥammad ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam}. This *ummah* shall be called forward and they shall testify (as to the truth of Nūḥ ^{'alayhis salām} evidence)."

In some versions of this Ḥadīth, this *ummah* shall be cross-questioned. "How do you know that Nūḥ ^{'alayhis salām} did deliver commands of Allah, when you were not present at the time?" They shall reply: "Our *nabi* ^{sallāllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam} informed us of that, the True Book revealed to him informed us of that." In the same manner, all the *ummahs* of (*anbiyā'*) shall be questioned.

For this reason the Qur'ān *karīm* says:

Thus we made you an *ummah* justly balanced, that you might stand witnesses over the nations (*al-baqarah* 143.)

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

Imam al-Rāzī ^{rahmatullāh 'alayh} writes that on the day of *qiyāmah* there shall be four types of witnesses:

(a) The *malā'ikah*. The Qur'ān says: وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ "And there will come forth every soul; with each will be our angels (*malā'ikah*) to bear witness" (*qāf* 21). مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ "Not a word does he utter, but there is Sentinel by Him ready (to note)" (*qāf* 18). وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ كَرِيمًا كَتِيبِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ "But verily, over you (are appointed *malā'ikah*) to protect you, kind and honourable, writing down your deeds, that they know and understand all that you do" (*al-infitār* 10-12).

(b) The *anbiyā'*. The Qur'ān says: وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ

“And I was a witness over them while I dwelt among them” (*al-mā'idah* 117). ○ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَٰؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا

“And how shall it be when we shall bring forth every nation with its witness, and shall bring you forth, O Prophet, as a witness over these (the *ummah*)?” (*al-nnisā'* 41)

(c) The *ummah* of Muḥammad ^{sallāhū 'alayhi wa sallam}. The following verse refers to this: ○ جَاءَ بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ “The *anbiyā'* and the witnesses will be brought forward” (*al-zumur* 69).

(d) The parts of man's body. Thus the Qur'an states: ○ يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ “That day their tongues and hands shall bear witness against them” (*al-nūr* 24).

That day shall We set a seal on their mouths; but their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness to all that they did (*yāsīn* 65)

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَ تَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ○

In short, all these verses indicate bearing witness on the day of *qiyāmah* of all those mentioned therein.

The last Ḥadīth under discussion also brings out a pleasing message. Allah says that He shall not disgrace and humiliate His dutiful servants in front of (and among) the unbelievers and evil-doers. Is not that in itself a great favour to the seekers of His goodwill, that He shall hide their faults and not reveal these to others?

○ Abdullāh Ibn ʿUmar ^{radīyalāhū 'anhu} reports that *rasūlullāh* ^{sallāhū 'alayhi wa sallam} said: “On the day of *qiyāmah* Allah shall call a believer to draw near and shall drop a curtain, so that none else may see. Allah shall then remind him of each and every evil deed and disobedience of his, which he shall be obliged to admit. Seeing the great number of his sins, that person shall feel that he indeed is bound to be destroyed. But then Allah shall say: ‘In the world I did cover up your faults, and today also I hide them and forgive them.’ Thereafter, his book of good deeds shall be given to him.”

The contents of this Ḥadīth are found in many other *ahādīth* also: that faults of those who obey Allah and seek His pleasure are forgiven. One should therefore be careful not to dis-

grace and attack the righteous ones for their faults, lest we may be the real losers through backbiting and making fun of those who in their own manner seek to please Allah, Who may cover up their faults and forgive them through the blessings of their other good deeds, while we, who continue to backbite, making fun of them, may be causing our own destruction. May Allah in His *rahmah* pardon us all.

This Ḥadīth also states that the night before the day of *ʿid* is called the night of reward, the night when Allah gives a reward to His slaves who should also properly value this night. It is usual that, once an announcement is made that next day is *ʿid*, the majority of us (including the good Muslims) feel tired because of Ramadān and prefer on this night to enjoy rest and sleep, whereas this too is a valuable night that should be spent in *ʿibādah*.

Rasūlullāh ^{sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam} said: "Whoever, stays awake for *ʿibādah* on the night preceding either *ʿid*, with the aim of gaining reward, his heart shall not die on that day when hearts shall decay." The meaning here is that at the time when evil will have over-powered every-body, his heart shall stay alive (guarded against evil). It may also perhaps refer to the time when the trumpet shall be blown to hold the day of *qiyāmah*; on that day his soul shall not become unconscious.

Rasūlullāh ^{sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam} is also reported to have said, "Whoever stays awake for prayers (*ʿibādah*) on the following nights shall enter *jannah*: *laylatat tarwiyah* (the night after the seventh *dhu al-ḥijjah*), *laylatat ʿarafah* (the night after the eighth *dhu al-ḥijjah*), *laylatan nahr* (the night after the ninth day of *dhu al-ḥijjah*), the night preceding *ʿid al-fiṭr* and the night preceding the 15th of *shaʿbān*.

The jurists of Islam have written that it is *musatahabb* (desirable) to remain in prayers (*ʿibādah*) on the nights of both *ʿids*. Imam Shāfiʿī is reported to have said that prayers are answered on the nights of Friday (the night after the day of Thursday), the nights before the two *ʿids* and on the night preceding the fifteenth of *shaʿbān*.

Some pious *ʿulamā* have said that, because of the exceptional greatness of Friday night, one should spend this night in *ʿibādah* during the month of Ramadān. But there are some *ahādīth* wherein we are prohibited from fixing only that night for *ʿibādah*. It is best that one or two other nights should be joined with it.

I have now come to the end of this book and in conclusion, hope that this shall be of benefit to those who seek Allah's pleasure. I beg and request all readers to pray for me, the humble writer of these pages, during those special hours (of acceptance) in Ramaḍān. Do mention me too in your prayers and Allah may, in His eternal Grace and mercy (*rahmah*), also shower His Grace and Pleasure upon me. *Āmīn.*

Hāfiẓ Muḥammad Zakariyya al-Kandhlawī
27th night of Ramaḍān, 1349 *hijri*