

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Khutbah 16/6/17 – the Laylat al-Qadr and the fire in London

تاريخ اليوم الواحد والعشرون من شهر رمضان، في السنة ألف وأربع مائة وثمانية وثلاثين

Today is the 21st of Ramaḍān 1438

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said about Ramadan:

وهو شهر أوله رحمةٌ وأوسطه مغفرةٌ وآخره عتقٌ من النار

It is a month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness and whose end is freedom from the Fire.

أمامنا الثلثُ الثالث من الشهر وهو الأيامُ العشرُ الأخيرة. ويمكنُ لنا أن يكونَ هذا الشهرَ مثلاً لحياتنا، لها بدايتها ووسطها وآخرها، ولكلِّ جزءٍ أدبهٌ ومعاملته. ولكن يشعرُ الإنسانُ عادياً في آخرِ رمضانَ أنَّ نهايةَ الشهرِ قريبةٌ وينتظرُها وينتظرُ العيدَ، وليس هذا بالصواب. في الحقيقةِ هو كأننا نصدُّ بجبلٍ والقمةُ أمامنا. ليس هذا الوقتُ للاستراحةِ ولكن هو الوقتُ لمضاعفةِ الجهدِ. وهذا الجزءُ الأخيرُ من رمضانَ هو الذي فيه يُنالُ العتقُ من النار. ولهذا الأيامُ واللياليُ أمورٌ وآدابٌ معينةٌ.

Before us we have the last ten days of Ramadan. We could consider any cycle such as the month of Ramadan as a metaphor for our human life, its beginning, middle and end. Each part has its proper adab and the behaviour due in it. It is very common to feel in the last ten days of Ramadan that the month is almost over and to begin to anticipate the ‘Eid, but this is not the correct approach. The last ten days of the month are an intensification of everything that has gone before. It is not a time to relax and look forward to the ‘Eid, but a time to gain more benefit from Ramadan while it is still with us. It is the third part in which is freedom from the Fire.

There are a number of matters which are particular to these last ten days.

الأولُ هو أن نطلبَ ليلةَ القدرِ. قال رسولُ الله فيما يروي عنه أبو سعيدٍ الخدريُّ { فَاتَّسَوْهَا فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَاخِرِ، وَاتَّسَوْهَا فِي كُلِّ وَتْرٍ

First, in the nights, in the uneven nights one begins to seek the Laylat al-Qadr. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said in that which Abū Sa’id al-Khudri narrated from him:

“So seek it in the last ten nights and seek it every uneven night.”

Allah, exalted is He, says:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ {1} وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ {2} لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ {3} تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ {4} سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

Truly We sent it down on the Night of Decree. And what will convey to you what the Night of Decree is? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. In it the angels and the Ruh descend by their Lord’s authority with every ordinance. It is Peace – until the coming of the dawn.

فَتُطَلَّبُ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ فِي الْوَتْرِ مِنَ الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَاخِرِ لِأَنَّهُ لَا يُعْلَمُ بِالْيَقِينِ فِي أَيِّ لَيْلَةٍ هِيَ. وَلَمَّا قُوِيَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ يُسْتَحَبُّ إِحْيَاءُ اللَّيْلِ بِالنَّوَافِلِ مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ وَتِلَاوَةِ الْقُرْآنِ وَذِكْرِ اللَّهِ فِي تِلْكَ اللَّيَالِي.

It is traditional to seek the Night of Power in the uneven nights of the last ten days, since there is some uncertainty as to which night it is. For those who have the desire and strength for it it is highly recommended to watch the night with extra prayers as much as one is able in those uneven nights.

ولكن من المعروف أنه من لا يستطيع إلا قيام ليلة واحدة يقوم ليلة السابع والعشرين، وعادياً يجتمعون في المساجد لذلك، كما نجتمع نحن في هذا المسجد إن شاء الله.

However, this Muslim community are widely agreed that if one is only able to observe one night, that that night should be the twenty-seventh, and it is common for the Muslims to gather in the mosques on that night and to stand the night in prayer.

ولمن لا يستطيع ذلك لصعوبة شغله أو سبب آخر ما روى أبو أمامة عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال من صلى العشاء في جماعة فقد أخذ بحظه من ليلة القدر

For those whose situations do not permit that, there is that which Abū Umamah narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“Whoever prays ‘Isha with the group has taken his portion from Laylat al-Qadr.”

وهو كما روى عن سيدنا عثمان بن عفان رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: مَنْ صَلَّى الْعِشَاءَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَامَ نِصْفَ لَيْلَةٍ، وَمَنْ صَلَّى الصُّبْحَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا صَلَّى اللَّيْلَ كُلَّهُ

It is also narrated generally about the prayer that Sayyiduna Uthman رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

مَنْ صَلَّى الْعِشَاءَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَامَ نِصْفَ لَيْلَةٍ، وَمَنْ صَلَّى الصُّبْحَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا صَلَّى اللَّيْلَ كُلَّهُ

“Someone who prays ‘isha with the group is as if he had stood in prayer for half a night, and someone who prays subh with the group is as if he had stood in prayer for the whole night.

وهذا الجزء الأخير من رمضان هو أهمها ففيه ليلة خير من ألف شهر، يعني من العمر العادي.

We had said that we can consider Ramadan as a metaphor for one’s life. This last section of Ramadan, just as the last portion of a person’s life, is the most important part, and it is the intensification of what has preceded. In this section is a single night which is worth a thousand months, and a thousand months is more than an average lifespan. This one night is worth an entire life.

- وَرَوَى أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ أُرِيَ أَعْمَارَ النَّاسِ قَبْلَهُ، أَوْ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ، فَكَأَنَّهُ تَقَاصَرَ أَعْمَارُ أُمَّتِهِ، أَنْ لَا يَبْلُغُوا مِنَ الْعَمَلِ، مِثْلَ الَّذِي بَلَغَ غَيْرُهُمْ فِي طُولِ الْعُمُرِ، فَأَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ، خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ.

It has been narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was shown the lifespans of the people (who had gone) before him, or what Allah willed of that, and it was as if the lives of the people of his community had become too short for them to be able to do

as many good action as others before them had been able to do with their long lives, so Allah gave him Laylat al-Qadr, which is better than a thousand months.

The other important aspect of the last ten days is the practice of *i'tikaf* retreat in the mosque for those who are able to do that or who have a strong desire to do that. If anyone does wish to do it they must arrange it beforehand with us and learn its fiqh. It is possible to do i'tikaf for a single day, a number of days or for the entire last ten days.

These then are the two practices which ennoble the last ten days of Ramadan, seeking the Laylat al-Qadr and entering *i'tikaf* and have a high resolve to undertake it in the spirit in which it must be done. We ask Allah to enrich the last days of our fasting and to illuminate them for us.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلِكُمْ وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

قال الله تعالى:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قُلْ يَأَيُّهَا الْكٰفِرُونَ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ

وَلَا أَنَا عٰبِدٌ مَا عٰبَدْتُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِي دِينِ

Say: ‘Unbelievers! I do not worship what you worship and you do not worship what I worship. Nor will I worship what you worship nor will you worship what I worship. You have your deen and I have my deen.’

كافر ^ له معنيان من الكفر وهو الجحود وبمعنى الزرع ومنه أُعْجِبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ أَي الزراع وتكفير الذنوب غفرانها^

Ibn Juzayy defines the word *kufir* in Arabic. He says:

Kāfir has two meanings: • [Firstly] from *kufir* which is denial. • And [secondly] from cultivation, an example of which is, “Its growth amazes the *kuffār*”¹ i.e. the cultivators. *Takfīr* of wrong actions [as in *kaffārah*] is forgiveness of them.

سبب هذه السورة أنّ قوما من قريش منهم الوليد بن المغيرة وأمّية بن خلف والعاصي بن وائل وأبو جهل ونظراؤهم قالوا يا محمد اتبع ديننا وتبع دينك اعبد آلهتنا سنة ونعبد إلهك سنة، فقال معاذ الله أن نشرك بالله شيئا ونزلت السورة في معنى البراءة من آلهتهم ولذلك قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من قرأها فقد برئ من الشرك^

The cause of [the revelation of] this surah was that some people from the Quraysh, of whom were al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah, Umayyah ibn Khalf, al-‘As ibn Wa’il, Abu Jahl and their like, said, “O Muhammad, follow our deen and we will follow yours. Worship our gods for a year and we will worship your god for a year.” So he said, “[We seek] refuge with Allah that we should associate anything as partner with Allah,” and the surah was revealed with the meaning of a declaration of disavowal of their gods. For that reason the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever recited it has certainly disavowed shirk.”

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ: هذا إخبار أن هؤلاء الكفار لا يعبدون الله كما قيل لنوح إنه لن يؤمن من قومك إلا من قد آمن إلا أن هذا في حق قوم مخصوصين ماتوا على الكفر وقد روى أن هؤلاء الجماعة المذكورين هم أبو جهل والوليد بن المغيرة والعاصي بن وائل والأسود بن المطلب وأمّية بن خلف وأبي بن خلف وابن الحجاج وكلهم ماتوا كفارا.

“...nor will you worship what I worship”

This informs us that these *kuffār* will not worship Allah, as was said to Nūḥ ﷺ, “That no-one will believe of your people except for someone who has already believed”². But this is with respect to a particular group of people who died as *kuffār*. It has been narrated that

¹ Surah Hadid, ayah 20.

² Surah Hud, ayah 36.

the above-mentioned group were Abu Jahl, al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah, al-'Asi ibn Wa'il, al-Aswad ibn al-Muttalib, Umayyah ibn Khalf, Ubayy ibn Khalf and Ibn al-Hajjaj all of whom died as *kuffār*.

British public life was changed from a Christian institution of public service into a specifically atheist rejection of the idea of selflessness, generosity and concern for other people. In conformity with a simplistic but dogmatically scientific and totally physical view of existence, they posited that people are only motivated by selfishness and greed and they transformed British public life into the pursuit of greed. Now with the conflagration in London we have seen precisely where this evil philosophy leads. Muslims ought to join with non-Muslims of good will to remove these evil rejectors of all that is good from public and commercial life, but more importantly to defeat this evil philosophy.