

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE MONTH OF RAJAB

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ

سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ

وَرَسُولَهُ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ أَوْصِيكُمْ وَآيَايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ

Let us increase our obedience towards Allah the Almighty by doing everything that He prescribes and avoiding all that He prohibits. Hopefully, we will be blessed by Him in this world and in the hereafter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In a few days we will be in the month of *Rajab* (the 7th month of the Islamic calendar), the month that is full of blessings for those who have faith in Allah and those who do good deeds. This month is one of the sacred months in the Islamic calendar as mentioned by Allah the Almighty in the Quran in Chapter 9 (Surah al-Tawbah), verse (ayat) 36:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ

السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ

Which means: *Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months (in a year), so was it ordained by Allah on the day when He created the heavens and the earth; of them, four are sacred.*

According to some Muslim scholars, the 4 months mentioned in the above verse refer to the months of *Zulqaedah*, *Zulhijjah*, *Muharram* and *Rajab*. These four months are also known as the months of prohibition because it is unlawful (*haram*) for men to engage in war during these months. In the month of *Zulqaedah* Muslims are on their journey towards Mecca to perform their pilgrimage (*Hajj*); the month of *Zulhijjah* is the month of pilgrimage in which Muslims perform their acts of worship; the month of *Muharram* is when Muslims return from pilgrimage; and the month of *Rajab* is the time when many Muslims perform their lesser pilgrimage (*Umrah*).

Ibn Abbas said that Allah the Almighty gives great rewards to those who do good deeds in these four months. Therefore, let us increase our remembrance of Allah, salutations towards Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), recitation of the Quran, supplications, and other acts of worship in these blessed months.

Let us also keep ourselves, our communities and our country from evil and immoral acts. Therefore, let us not organize any programs or activities that are Islamically immoral because such activities will invite Allah's wrath.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In his book of *Tafsir* Ibn Kathir explained that *Rajab* is derived from the word *tarjib* which means respect. Therefore, *Rajab* is the month that is worthy of respect and honor.

The month of *Rajab* is significant because the great event of *Isra' Mi'raj* (the ascension of Prophet Muhammad [pbuh] to heavens) took place in this month. It is also special because during *Isra' Mi'raj* the five daily prayers were made obligatory upon all Muslims. Allah the Almighty says in Chapter 20 (Surah Toha), verse (ayat) 14:

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي ﴿١٤﴾

Which means: *Indeed, I am Allah . There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.*

Rajab is also a blessed month because Muslims were ordered by the Prophet (pbuh) to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in order to defend their monotheistic belief during *Rajab*. The migration was crucial due to the increased threat to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his followers who were still new to the religion of Islam. If no efforts were made to take his followers out of the threatening situation in Mecca, the Prophet (pbuh) was concerned his followers would turn back to their old belief.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The noble month of *Rajab* bore witness to two important events in Islamic history; the liberation and then the fall of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was liberated during the reign of Caliph Umar bin Al Khattab. After that, the holy city was captured by the enemies of Islam and remained under enemy control for 50 years, before Sultan Salahuddin Al-Ayubi recaptured the city on 27th *Rajab* 583 *Hijriah*. However, 760 years after the event, on 28 *Rajab* 1342 *Hijriah* (1924 AD), the Islamic Caliphate was officially abolished by Mustafa Kemal Pasha

Ataturk in Turkey. This abolishment led to the loss of the concept of brotherhood among Muslims that was established by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and in 1948 AD (1377 Hijriah), Jerusalem fell back to the enemies of Islam until today.

The last event which also occurred in the month of *Rajab* was the birth of Imam Al-Shafi'i, one of the greatest Muslim scholars of all time, in 150 Hijriah (767 AD) in Gaza, Palestine. He was one of the four *Imams* of the major Islamic schools of thought (*Mazhab*) and Malaysia is among the countries that practice the Al-Shafi'i *Mazhab*. His religious expertise is admired by everyone. Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal once said: "Imam Al-Shafi'i is like the sun to the world."

To end today's sermon (*khutbah*), let us together self-reflect by increasing our acts of worship in this glorious month of *Rajab* and prepare ourselves for the coming months of *Sha'ban* and *Ramadhan*. Hopefully, we are forgiven and blessed by Allah the Almighty with blissful life in the hereafter. Allah says in Chapter 3 (Surah Ali-Imran), verse (ayat) 133:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ
أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

Which means: *And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord and for paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the righteous*

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيْمِ وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ
وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيْمِ وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّيْ وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتُهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُ
اللَّهُ الْعَظِيْمَ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا فَوْزَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِيْنَ