

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MONTH OF SHA'BAN

24 FEBRUARY 2023 | 3 SHA'BAN 1444H

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ
أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us all increase our devotion towards Allah the Almighty by performing all that He has decreed and abstaining from all that He has prohibited. Hopefully, we will be blessed in this world and in the Hereafter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Sha'ban is the eighth month in the Islamic calendar; it is between the months of *Rajab* and *Ramadan*. Indeed, *Sha'ban* is a month that has many benefits. The Prophet (peace be upon him [PBUH]) did not miss his opportunity to seek the pleasure and mercy of Allah the Almighty in this month. He increased *sunnah* fasting in the month of *Sha'ban*.

In a *Hadith* narrated by Imam Bukhari, *Saidatina* Aisha (The Prophet's wife [may Allah be pleased with her]) said:

... وَمَا رَأَيْتُهُ فِي شَهْرٍ أَكْثَرَ صِيَامًا مِنْهُ فِي شَعْبَانَ

Which means: “...I never saw Allah’s messenger ... fast (the non-obligatory ones) more in any month than in Sha’ban.”

Usamah bin Zaid (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I have never seen you fasting (non-obligatory ones) in any month as much as Sha’ban.’ The Prophet (PBUH) said:

Which means: “That is a month to which people do not pay much attention, between Rajab and Ramadan. It is a month in which the deeds are taken up to the Lord of the worlds, and I like that my deeds be taken up when I am fasting.”

In conjunction with the arrival of the month of *Sha’ban* this year, let us resolve to increase acts of worship such as *sunnah* fasting, *dhikr* (remembering Allah), reading the Quran and performing *sunnah* prayers, as well as making it a habit to attend congregational prayers at the mosque. Invite our family and close friends to worship together in this glorious month of *Sha’ban*, hopefully we will not be among those who forget to remember Allah the Almighty. Indeed, the act of inviting and calling others to obey Allah the Almighty is a praiseworthy practice. Allah the Almighty said in the Quran in Chapter 4 (*Surah An-Nisa*) verse (*ayat*) 114:

* لَأَخَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلاَّ مَنَ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾

Which means: *“There is no good in most of their secret talk, only in commanding charity, or good, or reconciliation between people. To anyone who does these things, seeking to please Allah, We shall give a rich reward.”*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the month of *Sha’ban*, especially on the night of *Nisfu Sha’ban* (mid-month of *Sha’ban*), we are encouraged to increase *Istighfar* (repentance) because the forgiveness of Allah the Almighty is spread as wide as possible. Let us take this opportunity to ask for forgiveness from Allah the Almighty and to forgive each other’s mistakes:

Allah the Almighty said in the Quran in Chapter 71 (*Surah Nuh*) verse (ayat) 10:

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾

Which means: *I said, “Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is ever forgiving.”*

According to Mu’az bin Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (PBUH) said:

يَطَّلِعُ اللَّهُ إِلَى خَلْقِهِ فِي لَيْلَةِ النَّصْفِ مِنْ شَعْبَانَ فَيَغْفِرُ لِجَمِيعِ خَلْقِهِ إِلَّا لِمُشْرِكٍ أَوْ مُشَاحِنٍ

Which means: “Allah looks down on the night of the middle of *Sha’ban* and forgives all His creations, apart from the idolaters and the *Mushahins* (the people who harbor hatred against the Muslims).”

In addition, we are encouraged to pray more during the night of *Nisfu Sha’ban* because that night is a night that Allah the Almighty answers prayers and supplications. This is as stated by Imam al-Syafie (may Allah be pleased with him) in the book of al-Umm which means: “*Mustajab* prayers are on 5 nights, namely Friday nights, the night of *al-Adha*, the night of *al-Fitr*, the first night of the month of *Rajab*, and the night of *Nisfu Sha’ban*”. (Note: *mustajab* means that prayers are most likely answered by Allah the Almighty).

The practice of reading the Quran, such as *Surah* (chapter) *Yasin*, asking forgiveness, reciting *dhikr*, praying and performing other acts of worship are ways of reviving the night of *Nisfu Sha’ban*, which was the practice of the *Tabi’in* (the successors of the Prophet’s companions) as narrated by Ibnu Rajab (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: “*Tabi’in* from the people of al-Sham, such as Khalid bin Ma’dan, Makhul, Luqman bin Amir, and some others glorified it (*Nisfu Sha’ban*) and they earnestly worshiped on that night”.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Although the acts of worship on *Nisfu Sha’ban* practiced by our society today such as reading *Yasin* and supplicating were not specifically prescribed by the Prophet (PBUH), these practices do not contradict the acts of the Prophet (PBUH) who increased his deeds of obedience by fasting, reciting *dhikr*, reading the Quran, performing *qiamulail* (*voluntary night prayers*), asking forgiveness from Allah (*Istighfar*) and supplicating.

Allah the Almighty said in the Quran in Chapter 41 (*Surah Al-Fussilat*)
verse (*ayat*) 33:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

Which means: “Who speaks better than someone who calls people to Allah, does what is right, and says, ‘I am one of those devoted to Allah’?”

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ
الآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ. أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ
الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.