

**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL.  
THE FOURTH SERMON OF THE MONTH OF SHA'BAN, DATED 27/8/1445 AH (8/3/2024) AD  
TOPIC: WELCOMING THE MONTH OF RAMADAN AND THE ETIQUETTE OF CONFIRMING THE  
SIGHTING OF THE CRESCENT.**

## **THE FIRST SERMON**

Praise be to Allah alone, who has made the month of Ramadan a month of forgiveness, guidance, mercy, and glad tidings for the believers who work with their faith. Allah says in His clear revelation: (شهر رمضان) الذي أنزل فيه القرآن هدى للناس وبينات من الهدى والفرقان فمن شهد منكم الشهر فليصمه ومن كان مريضا أو على سفر فعدة من أيام أخر يريد الله بكم اليسر ولا يريد بكم العسر ولتكملوا العدة ولتكبروا الله على ما هداكم ولعلكم تشكرون **"The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed as guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days. Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and [wants] for you to complete the period and to glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful."** (Surah Al-Baqarah: 2/185). We praise Him, glorify Him, and put our trust in Him. May peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, his family, his companions, and those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

After that,

O servants of Allah, I advise you and myself to have taqwa (God-consciousness) of Allah, both in secret and in public, as it is the ultimate goal of all acts of worship and all obligations and prohibitions. Allah, the Exalted, says: (يا أيها الذين آمنوا اتقوا الله حق تقاته ولا تموتن إلا وأنتم مسلمون) **"O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him]."** (Surah Al-Imran: 3/102)

Dear brothers and sisters in faith, this is the fourth meeting in the month of Sha'ban, and there are two or three days left until the blessed month of Ramadan arrives. Ramadan, the month of forgiveness, mercy, goodness, and blessings. The topic of our sermon today revolves around welcoming the month of Ramadan and the etiquette of confirming the sighting of the crescent moon.

Dear Muslims, the noble Islamic Sharia, when it prescribed fasting in the lunar month, established the means of determining the beginning of Ramadan through a natural and accessible method for the entire Ummah (Muslim community) at that time, which was illiterate and did not have the means of writing or calculation. This method is the sighting of the crescent moon with the naked eye.

**Narrated by Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said regarding the beginning of Ramadan: "Fast when you see it (i.e., the crescent moon) and break your fast when you see it. If it is obscured from you, then complete thirty days of Sha'ban."** (Agreed upon) (Al-Lu'lu' wal-Marjan 656) the meaning of (obscured): which is dust in the sky.

And Ibn Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned the beginning of Ramadan and said: **"Do not fast until you see the crescent moon, and do not break your fast until you see it. If it is cloudy for you, then estimate it for yourself,"** (Al-Lu'lu' wal-Marjan 653), and the meaning of (cloudy): meaning hidden and covered by clouds or haze or something else, and this was a mercy to the nation, as Allah did not burden them with the task of calculation, and they do not know it or do it well. If they were burdened with that, would have imitated another nation from the People of the Book or others who do not follow their religion.

**Three ways to confirm the beginning of Ramadan:**

The authentic hadiths have clarified that the beginning of Ramadan can be proven in one of three ways:

### **1- Seeing the crescent to prove the beginning of Ramadan:**

The scholars have differed on this: Is it sufficient to see one just witness, or two just witnesses, or a large group of people?

Those who say: Accepting the testimony of one just witness, have argued with the hadith of Ibn Umar, who said: **"The people saw the crescent, so I informed the Prophet that I saw it, and the Messenger of Allah fasted, and ordered the people to fast."** (Reported by Abu Dawood (2342), Ad-Daraqutni, and Al-Bayhaqi with a sound chain according to the conditions of Muslim. Ad-Daraqutni said: Marwan bin Muhammad narrated it uniquely from Ibn Wahb, who is trustworthy, as mentioned by An-Nawawi in Al-Majmu' 276/6). And with the hadith of Bedouin Arab who testified in front of the Prophet that he saw the crescent, so Bilal was ordered to announce to the people **"to start fasting."** (Reported by Abu Dawood (2341), At-Tirmidhi as Mursal and Musnad, and he said: There is disagreement in it (691), An-Nasa'i, who said: The Mursal is more correct, and Ibn Majah 1652), and on its chain there is a concern. They also said: Proving with one just witness is more cautious for entering into worship, and fasting a day of Sha'ban is lighter than breaking the fast of a day of Ramadan.

Those who stipulate the sighting of the crescent moon and the confirmation of the beginning of Ramadan should be by two just witnesses, relied on what Al-Husayn ibn Harith Al-Judali narrated. **He said: "Amir of Mecca Al-Harith ibn Hatib delivered a sermon to us, saying: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, commanded us to offer sacrifice upon sighting the moon. If we do not see it, then two just witnesses can testify and we will offer sacrifice based on their testimony."** (Reported by Abu Dawood and silence was maintained by him and Al-Mundhiri on it. Its narrators are reliable, except for Al-Husayn ibn Harith who is truthful, and Ad-Daraqutni authenticated it in "Nayl Al-Awtar" 261/4, Dar Al-Jil, Beirut). In comparison to other witnesses, their testimony is confirmed by two just witnesses.

As for those who stipulate a large crowd or a significant gathering, they are the Hanafis, and this is in clear weather conditions. They have permitted that in cloudy conditions, one person can witness the sighting of the moon and confirm the beginning of Ramadan, as the clouds may part for a moment allowing one person to see it while others cannot. However, if the sky is clear, with no obstruction or clouds, what would cause one person to see it while others cannot? Therefore, they said: It is necessary to have a large gathering as the uniqueness of seeing the moon among a large crowd, with their intentions aligned seeking what he is seeking, assuming no hindrances and with clear eyesight. Even if there are variations in the clarity, it is apparent in their mistake (mentioned in the commentary of Ibn Abidin citing Al-Bahr 92/2).

As for the news of Ibn Umar and the Bedouin - in which the sighting of the crescent moon and the beginning of Ramadan are confirmed - the scholar Rashid Rida commented on "Al-Mughni" saying: (There is no indication in these two reports that people saw the crescent moon, as only one person saw it. They are not in a disputed matter, especially with Abu Hanifa, and thus everything built upon them is invalidated). (Refer to the commentary on Al-Mughni with explanation 93/3).

Regarding the vast number of witnesses, it is left to the opinion of the Imam or the judge without specifying a certain number according to the correct view. (Refer to Al-Ikhtiyar in the explanation of Al-Mukhtar 29/1). It is obligatory for Muslims to search for the crescent (and consequently the beginning

of Ramadan) on the twenty-ninth day of Sha'ban at sunset; because whatever leads to an obligatory matter becomes obligatory too, though it is a communal obligation.

## **2- Completing the count of Sha'ban to thirty to confirm the beginning of Ramadan:**

Completing the count of Sha'ban to thirty, whether the sky is clear or cloudy. If the crescent moon is not sighted on the night of the thirtieth of Sha'ban, they should complete Sha'ban to thirty. This action is considered evidence for the beginning of Ramadan.

It is necessary for the visibility of Sha'ban to be known from its beginning, so that the night of the thirtieth, in which the moon is sought, and would thus be the beginning of Ramadan, is known. The month is completed in case of no sighting, indicating that Ramadan has not begun. Neglecting this matter leads to shortcomings, as the focus on confirming the entry of the months only occurs in three months: the beginning of Ramadan for fasting, Shawwal to confirm its end, and Dhul-Hijjah to confirm the day of Arafah and beyond.

It is incumbent upon the Ummah, and those in authority, to carefully verify the confirmation of all months, as some are dependent on others. The entry of Ramadan requires the sighting of the crescent of Sha'ban.

### **The estimation of the crescent to prove the entry of Ramadan:**

The use of the method of estimation of the crescent to prove the entry of Ramadan comes up when it is cloudy, or as the hadith says: "**When it becomes cloudy over you**" or "**When it is cloudy over you**" or "**When it becomes hazy over you,**" meaning a situation where there is an obstacle preventing its visibility. In some authentic narrations, including Malik from Nafi from Ibn Umar, which is a golden chain of narration, and the most authentic chains according to Al-Bukhari: "**When it becomes cloudy over you, estimate it.**" **What does "estimate it" mean?**

An-Nawawi in Al-Majmu': (Ahmad ibn Hanbal and a few others said: Its meaning is to restrict it, and estimate it as it stays embedded in the clouds, from "qadr" meaning to restrict, like saying: (His sustenance was restricted for him) and these scholars deemed fasting the cloudy night obligatory.

Mutarraf ibn Abdullah - among the senior Tabi'in - and Abu Al-Abbas ibn Sarij - among the senior Shafi'is - and Ibn Qutaybah and others said: Its meaning is to estimate it according to the lunar phases.

Abu Hanifa, Ash-Shafi'i, the majority of the predecessors and successors said: Its meaning is to estimate the complete number as thirty days.

The majority relied on the narrations we mentioned, all of which are authentic and explicit: "**So complete the count as thirty,**" "Estimate it as thirty," which explains the narration: "Estimate it," in an absolute sense. (Al-Majmu' 270/6).

However, Imam Abu Al-Abbas ibn Sarij did not favor one narration over the other, but Ibn Al-Arabi reported from him that his statement "Estimate it" is addressed to those whom Allah has granted this knowledge, and his statement "Complete the count" is addressed to the general public. (See: Fath Al-Bari 23/6, Aleppo edition).

## **THE SECOND SERMON:**

Praise be to Allah, the One who says in His Noble Book: ( وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ) (133) الَّذِينَ يَنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (134) وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ "And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous, Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good; And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know." (Quran 3:133-135).

We praise Him, seek His help, seek His forgiveness, and seek refuge in Allah from the evils of ourselves and from the evil consequences of our deeds. Whoever Allah guides will never be led astray, and whoever He leaves astray will never find guidance. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, without any partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. He said in his noble Hadith: **"May a man be disgraced who, having Ramadan come upon him, and is not forgiven." So if one is not forgiven in Ramadan, then when will he be forgiven?** Peace and blessings be upon him, his family, and his companions.

After that:

O servants of Allah, noble Muslims, today is the twenty-seventh day of the month of Sha'ban as we welcome the blessed month of Ramadan. How can we make the most of the abundant goodness during Ramadan? Let us seize this golden opportunity to improve our relationship with our Creator, Allah, and with people, the creatures of Allah Almighty:

Regarding our relationship with Allah, His status be exalted:

Ramadan provides the Muslim with many means to revive his heart and improve his connection with his Lord.

The foremost of these means is fasting, which is a great way to control and discipline oneself. Along with fasting from food and drink, we should also reduce our speech and laughter as much as possible, and let us uphold the motto "Control your tongue," keeping our speech away from idle talk and all other harmful speech.

### **Secondly: Attachment to the mosques:**

The mosque has a great role in enlightening the hearts...

(فِي بُيُوتِ أَذْنِ اللَّهِ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ) **"In houses which Allah has permitted to be raised and His name be mentioned therein; exalting Him within them in the mornings and the evenings. ."** (An-Nur: 36) In the mosque, hearts are connected to obedience to Allah and the soul is restrained from disobedience. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: **"Shall I not tell you about what erases sins and elevates ranks with Allah?" They said, "Of course, O Messenger of Allah." He said: "Performing ablution when it is difficult, increasing steps to the mosques, and waiting for prayer after prayer. That is the Ribat, that is the Ribat."** (Ribat means the bond, meaning the desired bond, the origin of the bond is to confine oneself to something as if he has confined himself to this obedience )

**Thirdly: The Noble Quran:** Ramadan is the month of the Quran and it was the tradition of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, to study the Quran in it... It is a great means for healing hearts, guiding them, and enlightening them. Allah says: ( يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ )

(لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ) "O mankind, there has come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers." (Yunus: 10/57) And the connection of a Muslim with the Quran is in proportion to his connection with Allah.

**Fourthly: Night Prayer:** Night prayer is an important means of reviving the heart. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Adhere to night prayer, for it was the practice of the righteous before you, a means of closeness to Allah, a deterrent from sin, an expiation for evil deeds, and a shield from illness for the body."

**Fifthly: Making the Most of Virtuous Times:** The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Indeed, your Lord has moments of grace in your days, so expose yourselves to them, perhaps one of you will be touched by a moment of grace that will never make him miserable thereafter."

**Sixthly: I'tikaf (Seclusion in the Mosque):** I'tikaf is to seclude oneself in the mosque for the obedience of Allah, and it is recommended at all times in Ramadan and otherwise, with the best being in the last ten days of Ramadan for the servant to encounter Laylat al-Qadr (the Night of Decree), which is better than a thousand months. Ibn Rajab said: "The essence of I'tikaf is cutting off ties with creation to connect with the service of the Creator."

**Seventh: Supplication:** Supplication is worship, and destiny is not repelled except by it. In it lies the poverty, humility, and submission of the servant to the One in whose hand is the dominion of all things. Let us beware of supplicating with the tongue without the presence of the heart. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "And know that Allah does not answer a supplication from a heedless heart."

Let us increase our supplications for our persecuted Muslim brothers and sisters everywhere, and let us specifically remember those who are steadfast in Palestine with abundant prayers. And let us also invoke against the oppressive tyrants who defy Allah and His Messenger in every place, hoping that Allah - glorified be He - will relieve them.

**Eighth: Charity:** The one who contemplates the Book of Allah Almighty will find many verses that urge Muslims to spend in the way of Allah. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, was the most generous of people, and he was most generous during Ramadan. Allah says: "Take, [O, Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase." (Quran 9:103) The first beneficiary of charity is its giver, as it frees them from stinginess and purifies them from sins.

**Ninth: Reflection and Remembrance.**

**Tenth: Self-accountability.**

As for the worshipers of Allah - glorified be He - among the people, striving for good among them has a great spiritual reward in the heart of the Muslim servant. It increases faith, strengthens it, and makes the person beloved to Allah Almighty. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to people. The most beloved deeds to Allah are bringing happiness to a Muslim, relieving him of distress, paying off his debt, or warding off hunger from him. To walk with a brother in need is more beloved to me than secluding myself in the mosque for a month..."

Supplication:

"O Allah, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of existence, the Possessor of Majesty and Honor, and the One who cannot be harmed. We invoke You against the unjust oppressors, the occupying Jews who

transgress in Palestine and all Muslim lands, and against those who support them openly, obey them in falsehood, allow them to commit evil, extend their influence, and assist them in their oppression. We ask You, O Allah, not to grant them any success, for they are treacherous. Do not rectify their actions, for they are corrupt. Do not fulfill their desires or hopes, for they are unjust. Create divisions between them and what they desire and seek. Do not elevate them, O our Lord, except to bring them down and cause them to fail, for they are futile. Do not raise a banner for them, and do not grant them any objective or goal. Humiliate them and make them a lesson and a sign for the people. O Allah, send peace and blessings upon our Master Muhammad, his family, his companions, and those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Judgment. And grant them abundant peace."