

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

We seek forgiveness from Allah

We stand witness to Allah that there is no God but Him

That Muhammad (saww) is his slave and messenger

Introduction

Some Characteristics of the Month of Rajab

- Prophet Muhammad (saww) said, “Rajab is the month of Allah; Sha’ban is my month and Ramadhan is the month of my Ummah.” [*Mafaatihul Jinaan*]
- This month is so blessed that in this month we have the birth anniversaries of three of our Imams. On the 1st Rajab is the birth anniversary of Imam Muhammad Baqir (as). On the 5th is the birth anniversary of Imam Ali Naqi (as). Finally, on the 13th Rajab is the birth anniversary of the miraculously born Imam Ali (as).
- The Prophet (saww) has said that *Rajab al Murrajab* means something that can be magnified or glorified. He further says that Rajab is the name of a river in heaven. It is said that the colour of this river in jannah is whiter than pure white and its taste is sweeter than honey. It is said that whoever fasts for one day in the month of Rajab, Allah swt will let him have a drink from that river in heaven. Thus we should try to fast for at least one day in the virtuous month of Rajab. [*Mafaatihul Jinaan*]
- This month is also known as the month of *Istighfar*. It is recommended that we recite the following more than 100 times in the month of Rajab:

Astaghfirullah alladzi laa ilaha illa Huwa Wahdah

Laa shariikallahu wa atabu ilaih

This short dua begins with *Istighfar* but ends with *taubah*. According to a hadith, the word *Istighfar* refers to medicine while the word *taubah* refers to the cure. [*Mizaanul Hikmah*]

A Short Note on Imam Ali An Naqi (as)

- Yahya bin Aqdam who was one of the wise men of caliphs Makmun's age said; the caliphs asked Imam (as) many questions through a letter which were replied by him. The questions of Yahya and the response given by Imam (as) are as follows:

Question No.1:

When Sulayman (as) demanded the throne of queen Balqees of Sheeba, his minister Asif Barkhia said, *"I can bring the throne for you in the time of winking of an eye"*, why did Sulayman (Solomon) (as) himself not do that? Did he himself not have the knowledge?

Answer:

Whatever Asif did was through Sulayman (as) and he had received his wisdom and knowledge from him since, Sulayman (as) was a Prophet, he had the capacity and power to perform all these works. But because of it, that he wanted to introduce his successor to the people and make them aware of his station he assigned him this work.

[Source: *islamicoccasions.com*]

Similarly we know that Prophet Mohammad (saww) on numerous occasions asked Imam Ali (as) to carry out some tasks on his behalf since he wanted to make it clear that Imam Ali (as) was his successor. Also, we know that Imam Ali (as) also once referred a question that was asked to him to Imam Hassan (as), his son, since he was his successor.

Question No.2:

Why did Ali (as) order his men in the battle of Jamal (Camel) to chase and bring into effect the pursuit of only "the warriors" and not to kill those who ran away, or were not armed, or injured? But in the Siffeen battle he ordered to kill them all, whether armed or unarmed, injured or uninjured, whomsoever they found and laid hands upon. Why was this difference in the order?

Answer:

The battle of Jamal was a battle of Islam versus Islam and a battle between deceived Muslims against other Muslims. However, the battle of Siffeen was a battle of infidels against Islam. It was a combat between infidels and the real Islam.

[Source: *islamicoccasions.com*]

Imam's (as) Judgment

In the age of Mutawakkil regime, a lady claimed that she was Zainab, the daughter of Fatima (sa). The people said, *"Many many years have passed since that period when Zainab lived and you are still quite young."*

Mutawakkil said, *"I know that she is lying, but what proof and logic do you have to condemn her."*

They said, *"We do not know, Imam Hadi (as) should solve this problem."*

Mutawakkil at once summoned Imam (as) and told him about that matter.

Imam (as) said, *"Send her to the cage of the lions, if she is telling the truth, because the beasts do not harm the children of Fatimah (sa) and do not eat their flesh"*. Mutawakkil said to the woman, *"What do you say?"*

She said, *"This man wishes that I may be killed. If he is right then let him do it himself."*

Mutawakkil said, *"She is right, you must do it first yourself."*

Imam (as) replied, *"There is no hurdle to do it"*. He went to the lions in the cage and sat among them. All observed with amazement, that the lions sat very respectfully before the Imam (as) and sometimes caressed themselves against his body and he caressed their bodies with his hand, affectionately. When the Imam (as) ordered that they might move to a corner,

all of them crept to a nook. Then Imam (as) came out of the cage and went to Mutawakkil and said, "O woman now it is your turn." The woman started crying and begging saying, "I told a lie, I am the daughter of such and such man, and wanted to play a trick and a hoax but it did not work." [Source: islamicoccasions.com]

- We know that Imam Ali (as) was known as Asadullah, i.e. the *Lion of Allah*. In the battle of Khaybar when Marhab asked what the name of Imam Ali was, he replied that his mother named him *Haidar* which means a *Lion*. Thus it should not be surprising that lions do not attack the children of *Assadullah*, the *Lion of Allah*.
- In a related incident, it is said that during the time of Imam Hassan Al Askari (as), the Christians referred to him as Christ because of his pious personality. The Abbasside rule of the time was envious of the Imam (as) and asked the Imam (as) to enter a cage of beasts. However, when the ruler went to the cage he was amazed to see that the Imam (as) was praying in the cage and the lions were humble behind the Imam (as). Even the beasts recognized the Imam (as) of their time.

Tafseer on Surah Ikhlas: Sincerity or Purity of Intentions

- In Surah az Zumar 39:2, Allah swt says:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ

We have sent down thee the Book with the truth;
So worship God, making thy religion His sincerely.

In the above verse, the Arabic word *Mukhlis* has been used which means *sincerely*. In the verse, Allah has asked his servants to worship him sincerely.

- It is said that once someone came to the Prophet (saww) and asked, 'If we give our wealth for charity in the hope that our names will be related to the charity and will be mentioned, then in that case will we be rewarded for giving charity?' The Prophet (saww) replied, 'No.' Then the person asked again, 'If we give our wealth for charity not just in the hope that our names will be mentioned but also for the intention of sawaab, then will we be rewarded for our act?' The Prophet (saww) then replied, 'Allah rewards only those with sincere or Khalis intentions. Thus obedience lies in pure sincerity.'

[*Al Amsal*, Vol 15 pg 14]

- In Surah Mulk 67:2, Allah swt says:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

Who created death and life, that He might try you which of you is fairest in works;
And He is the Al-mighty, the All-forgiving.

In this verse Allah swt has emphasized on the quality of deeds rather than the quantity of deeds. Allah swt will thus judge which one amongst his slaves has the fairest of deeds.

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Hence again, the stress is on the purity of intentions behind a deed rather than the number of good deeds performed.

- In the Quran, the word 'death' has often been used before the word 'life'. According to Allama Tabarsi in *Majma'ul Bayan*, the reason why death has been mentioned before life is that a servant of Allah is closer to his Lord during death than when he is alive. This is because when a person is dead, his *nafs* or temptations are nullified. It is the *nafs* which contaminates the purity of intentions.

- In Surah Ashura 42:49, Allah swt has said:

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَاءًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذَّكُورَ

To God belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth.

He creates what He will, He gives to whom He will females;

And He gives to whom He will males.

Here Allah swt has said that sometimes He gives females to parents and at other times males. Note that here the word 'female' has been used before 'male'. According to Allama Tabarsi in *Majma'ul Bayan*, the reason why the word females comes before males is that daughters are closer to parents and indeed the Quran has referred to them as *rahma* or blessings. Indeed Prophet Mohammad (saww) was blessed with a daughter, which was gift from Allah to his last Prophet (saww).

- In Surah al Baqarah 2:28, Allah swt has said:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمَيِّتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

How do you disbelieve in God given that you were dead and He gave you life?

Then he shall make you dead, then He shall give you life then unto Him you shall be returned.

If one ponders over this verse, one would realize that everyone has two deaths and two lives. This is because a person is dead before he comes in this world. He then has life in this (temporary) world. He then dies again and ultimately is raised again by Allah swt.

- In the Holy Quran, Surah Al Insan 76:1, Allah swt says,

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا

Has it not come a space of time, when he was not even worth mentioning. But now after being given life he disbelieves in Allah.

In this noble verse, Allah has asked his slaves to bring down their ego and to be thankful to Him for their creation.

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- It should be noted that in the Holy Quran the word ‘We’ is used a lot instead of the word ‘I’. This is because the word ‘I’ gives an egoistic impression and even the Almighty prefers to use the word ‘We’. Allah swt has said in the Quran,

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ

And they were not enjoined anything except that they should serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience, upright, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and that is the right religion. [Al Bayyinah 98:5]

Here the Arabic word *mukhlisiin* has been used for ‘sincerely’.

- In Surah Sad, 38:79, Allah swt has said:

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

Said he, My Lord, respite me till the day they shall be raised.

Here the Quran is narrating the story of *Iblis*, or *Satan*, when he asked Allah to be reprieved till the day of Judgement. *Iblis* then said that till the Day of Doom he will lead everyone astray. It is then narrated in 38:83:

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

Excepting those Thy servants among them that are sincere.

Thus as the above verse points out, even Satan admitted that he will lead everyone astray except those who are amongst the *Mukhlisiin*, i.e. the ones who are sincere and pure.

- It should be noted that the words *Mukhlis* and *Mukhlas* have different meanings. *Mukhlis* refers to *those who are sincerely obedient*, while *Mukhlas* refers to *those who are thoroughly purified*.
- Allama Ibn Manzur, the lexicologist, [*Lisaanul ‘Arab*, Vol 4 pg 173] elaborating on the Arabic word *Mukhlas* has said that *Mukhlas* refers to *those whom Allah has purified and those who are the chosen ones of Allah*. Allah had told Iblis from the onset that he will be able to lead everyone astray except for the *Mukhlas*, who are the chosen ones and they are the ones who Iblis will fail to seduce.
- It is interesting to note that Iblis himself believed in God and had faith in Him. However, where he went wrong was that he refused the order of Allah to prostrate before Adam (as). This is where he failed. Iblis said to Allah, ‘*You created me from fire but created man from clay. So how can I prostrate before man.*’ Hence Iblis failed because of his ego rather than his faith. He thought that he was superior to man and went as far as to disobey the order of Allah. Consequently he was banished by Allah. The logical consequence of this story is that religion or *deen* does not just constitute faith. It also involves practice and total submission and pure sincerity towards Allah swt. Thus *hasad* or jealousy is a bad disease. The fall of Iblis is a classic example of how ego can lead to someone’s downfall.

Mind Blowing Story

Bahlul and the Mosque

Fazl bin Rabi' had a mosque constructed in Baghdad. It was decided to place a plaque on its door. The people asked Fazl what should be written on it. Bahlul also happened to be present.

He asked Fazl, *"Who did you make the mosque for?"*

Fazl replied, *"For Allah."*

Bahlul said, *"If you made it for Allah, then don't inscribe your name on the plaque."*

Fazl angrily said, *"Why shouldn't I have my name inscribed on the tablet? People have to know who the maker of the mosque is!"*

"Then have it inscribed that the maker of this mosque is Bahlul."

"I certainly will not have that written!"

"If you made this mosque for fame and self-show then you have lost your reward."

Fazl became speechless at Bahlul's words.

He said, *"Whatever Bahlul says, have that inscribed."*

This time Bahlul said, *"Have a verse from the Sacred Qur'an inscribed on the door of the mosque."*

A Lesson from Imam

Indeed Al Imam al-Baqir (as) once said:

"Perseverance in an action is more difficult than the act itself."

He was then asked, *"What is meant by perseverance in action?"*

The Imam replied, *"A man does some kindness to a relative or expends something for the sake of God, Who is One and has no partner. Thereupon the reward of a good deed performed secretly is written for him. Later, he mentions it to someone and that which was written earlier is wiped out and instead the reward of a good deed performed openly is written for him. Later, when he makes a mention of it again, the vice of riyah' is written for him (instead of the reward written earlier)."*

[Al -Kulayni *at-Kafi*, kitab al-'iman wa al-kufr, bab al-riyah', hadith No. 16.]

Imam Ali (as) always used to give charity in secret. No one knew who the donor was. It was only after the shahadat of Imam Ali (as) that people found out who the donor was.

Disclaimer:

In this tafseer class, there might be shortcomings in imparting the knowledge of the tafseer. If there is any information that requires correction, please do not hesitate to let us know via e-mail: jaafari_tafseer_committee@yahoo.com.sg. Allah knows best.