Last 10 days of Ramadan

 “As-salámu ‘alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!”

“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa. May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Allah, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”

All Praise is due to Allah, We praise Him and we seek help from Him. We ask forgiveness from Him. We repent to Him; and we seek refuge in Him from our own evils and our own bad deeds. Anyone who is guided by Allah, he is indeed guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the Only One without any partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad, sws, is His servant, and His messenger.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem! Ya Ay-yuhal-latheena ‘aamanut taqul-laaha, haqqa tuqaatihee wala tamu tun-na, il-la wa antum Muslimoon.”

O You who believe, – Fear Allah, as He should be feared, and die not except as Muslims.

Ya Ay-yuhal-latheena ‘aamanut taqul-laaha, wa qooloo qawlan sadeedaa. Yuslih-lakum a’maalakum wa yaghfir lakum thunoobakum, wamay yu-til-laaha warasoolah, faqad faaza fawzan atheemaa.”

O You who believe, – Be aware of Allah, and speak a straightforward word. He will forgive your sins and repair your deeds. And whoever takes Allah and His prophet as a guide, has already achieved a mighty victory…

“Bismillahir Rahmaanir Raheem! Inna anzalna hu fee laylatil Qadr. Wamaa ad’raaka maa laylatul Qadr. Laylatul Qadri khairun-minal fe-shahr. Tanaz-zalul malaa-ikatu, war-ruuhu fee-haa bi-ithni Rab-bihim min kulli amrin, Salaamun hiya hat-taa mat’la-il fajr.”

“We sent it down on the Night of Glory. What will explain to you what the Night of Glory is? The Night of Glory is better than a thousand months; on that night the angels and the Spirit descend again and again with their Lord’s permission on every task; [there is peace that night] until the break of dawn.” [Sura 97]

My respected Brothers,

By the Grace of Allah, we are near the end of Ramadhan and we completing the last ten days. We are told that the Night of Glory, Laylatul Qadr, falls on the 21st, 23rd, 25th 27th or 29th night. Most likely it is the 27th night but Allah knows best. This is the night in which Allah, the glorified and exalted, Rabbul Jalaal wal ikraam, the Lord of the Majesty and Honour, sent down His Archangel Gabriel, Jibreel alayis-salaam, to our earthly realm of time and space. The time was during the last ten nights of Ramadan in the year 610 and the place was in a cave on Jabal Nur, the Mountain of Light, near Makka. Here Jibreel took Muhammad sws, the son of Abdullah, in a tight embrace, and commanded him to “Read.” Muhammad sws protested that he could not read, he was unschooled in reading and writing, but Jibreel persisted, and slowly, with great effort, the first majestic words of the Holy Qur’an rolled from Muhammad’s (sws) lips:

*“Iqra! Bismi Rabbikal lathee khalaq! Khalaqal insaana min ‘alaq. Iqra! Wa Rabbukal akram. Al-lathee ‘al-lama bil qalam. ‘Al-lamal insaana maa lam ya’lam”.*

“Read” in the Name of your Lord who created: He created man from a clinging form. Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One, who taught by [means of] the pen, who taught man that which he did not know.”

Over the next 23 years, through pain, suffering and ultimate victory of truth over falsehood, the Words of Allah emerged from the timeless space-less realm of eternity, and entered into our earthly domain. These sacred words illuminated the spiritual darkness of Arabia in the 7th Century, and its irresistible light has shone down the ages. We must never forget what the world was like at the time. The superpowers Rome and Persia were at war. Arabia and sunken back to idol worship. There were some Jews and Christians, but their scriptures were no longer the same revelations brought by Prophets Moses and Jesus. Through human error and human tampering, adding their own gospels, the Divine Word had been compromised. The pure monotheism taught by those great prophets, Moses and Jesus, was all but lost. It was time to put matters right. Allah’s answer was to send a ‘perspicacious Book,’ a Furqaan, a Criterion, to measure right from wrong, to distinguish truth from falsehood. The Holy Quran has reconstructed the pure original message of Divine Unity, the message of Tawheed, which was taught by all the Prophets. Those who describe Islam as a new religion are mistaken. Islam means peaceful submission to the One Who created everything. This is the oldest, not the newest revealed Religion. The religion of One God, Tawheed, Divine Unity, is the same religion of all the Prophets from Adam through Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Prophet Muhammad sws himself said that he did not come to teach a new message, only to confirm and complete the message of earlier Prophets. The Holy Quran also confirms this with the last verse that was revealed at Arafat, during the Prophet Muhammad sws last Hajj:

*“This day have I perfected your religion for you, and completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.” [S.5:v3]*

My dear Brothers, 1400 years ago Prophet Muhammad sws faced an uphill task against vested interests of his time. You must remember that the Kaaba had 360 idols around it. Pilgrims came there to worship those idols and this made the guardians of the Kaaba, the Quraish tribe, very wealthy. Muhammad’s (sws) message of One God was not welcomed. Just like Moses, Prophet Musa’s message angered the Pharaoh, Ramses II. So today also, the message of Islam is a threat to the Pharaohs and Emperors of the modern age. This message says that everything belongs to God, and we human beings are the trustees, the Ambassadors of God. We have to care for everything in our environment as a sacred trust. We cannot just abuse and exploit the earth as if there is no tomorrow. This is the message of Islam. This is the message of Lailatul Qadr, the Night of Power, the Night of Glory. We who are the heirs, the inheritors of the Prophets, must carry this message forward: Worship no one but One God, serve your fellow human beings and care for our common living environment with love and devotion to the One who Created us all, until the end of your days.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds; may the greetings and peace be upon the best messenger, Muhammad(sws), the unlettered prophet; and upon his family and upon all of his companions.

Amma ba’ad, And, after this,

Behold, Allah and his angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe! Ask for blessings on him, and salute him with a worthy greeting.

O Allah! Send your greetings upon Muhammad(sws) and his family, just as you sent your greetings on Abraham, and his family. O Allah, send your blessings on Muhammad(sws) and his family, just as you blessed Abraham and his family. In both worlds, you are praiseworthy and exalted.”

Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil ‘Aalameen. Was-salaatu was-salaamu alaa Khairil mursaleen. Muhammadin-nabeey-yil Ummiy-yee, wa-‘alaa aalihee, wasah-bihee, aj-ma’een.

Ammaa ba’ad:

InnAllaha wa malaaikata yusallúna alan nabi. Yá ay yuhal latheena ámanu sallú alayhi wasalli mú tas leema. Allahumma salli alá Muhammad, wa ala áli Muhammad, kama salayta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali Ibrahim. Allahumma barik ala Muhammad, wa alaa áli Muhammad, kama barakta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali ibrahim. Fil ála meen, innaka hameedun majeed.”

**Part Two:**

Sub’ hanallahi wal hamdu lillah, wala hawla wala quwwata illah billah yu althi yual theem.

“All glory is for Allah, and all praise is for Allah; There is no power and no strength except with Allah.”

Dear Brothers,

How can you and I get the most benefit from Ramadhan, and Lailatul Qadr, the Night of Glory? Here are some suggestions:

* Firstly, let us not just forget fasting until next year. Let us do all the good things of Ramadhan throughout the year, to keep us spiritually healthy and focussed.
* It is a recommended Sunnah to fast for 6 days of Shawwal and some people also fast on every Monday and Thursday throughout the year. This is a wonderful habit, because it keeps us connected to the spirit of Ramadhan. It keeps us connected to Allah’s blessings and it keeps us self disciplined. It keeps us away from excessive eating and drinking. It moderates our behaviour. Prophet Muhammad(sws) said, the worst thing a man can fill is his stomach. We should fill one third with food, one third with water, and one third we should leave empty. This is very wise. We only recently discovered that it takes 20 minutes for the stomach to tell the brain that it’s full. So that’s why we overeat. During those crucial 20 minutes we continue to see, smell and taste all those goodies on the table, and our brain thinks we’re still hungry but the stomach has already said: Stop! Enough! But we can’t hear our stomachs. Let us take Prophet Muhammad sws advice and moderate our eating. It will help us to moderate everything else.
* A very important suggestion for non-Arabic speakers. I think that most of us here do not speak Arabic as a first language. Let’s really work hard to understand every prayer and every supplication, in Arabic and English. This is so important. Arabic is the language of the Quran and it’s the lingua franca, the common language of the Muslim world. We must say our prayers in Arabic, because, when we travel to any part of this planet, we can join any Muslim group in India or Brazil or Nigeria or Outer Mongolia. When we hear the adhaan it’s the same words we hear everywhere on earth. Isn’t Islam wonderful? Isn’t it wonderful to be part of this global family? Imagine! we can lead the prayers or follow the prayers anywhere on the planet, with no problems. But remember that only 18% of the world Muslim population is Arabic. The vast majority, 88% of us are non-Arabs who must make a special effort to understand our prayers properly in our mother tongue. If you took a random sample, you will find that many of us non-Arab Muslims do not even understand the meaning of our prayers. We learn the words in Arabic, like parrots but we seldom care to learn the meanings. This is wrong. Do you think that Allah will be impressed if you can recite His Holy Book with such beautiful and melodious tones, but your mind is disconnected, because you haven’t bothered to learn the meaning of what you say? Brothers, lets resolve today to start learning the meanings of our prayers, and our supplications, Salaah and Du’ah, so that we can put meaning and feeling into our communication with Allah. While our lips are saying the words in Arabic, our hearts and minds must recite the translation in English. This will help us to engage with our Creator with meaning and feeling, in other words, with sincerity. In the final analysis, Allah is not impressed with our outward actions, but with the intention in our hearts. Allah deserves nothing less from us, but to be sincere to Him.

O Allah, help us to purify ourselves in body, mind, heart and spirit. Help us to seek and find your good pleasure, and O Allah, remember us in the company of your beloved friends.

“O Allah, do not let our hearts deviate from the Truth now that we have been guided , but grant us Mercy from Your very Presence, for You are the Grantor of bounties without measure.”

Rabbana laa tuzigh quloobanaa, ba’da ith hadaytanaa wahablanaa milla dunka Rahma. Innaka antal wah-haab.

My Lord, help me to perfect my prayer, and of my descendants, Our Lord, accept this prayer….

Rabbi ja’alni muqeemus salaati, wamin dur-riy-yati, Rabbanaa wata qabbal du’aah…

My Lord, forgive me, and my parents, and all Believers until the Day of Reckoning..

Rabbigh firlee wali waali dayya, walil Mu’mineena yawma yaqoomul hisaab…

Glory to Allah, Lord of Majesty and Honour, and Peace on the Prophets, and Praise to Allah, Lord of all creation!

“Soob’ haanaka Rabika Rabbil-‘’izzati ‘Ammaa yasifoon, wasalaamun ‘alal Mursaleen, wal Hamdu lil-Laahi Rabbil Aalameen.”

Ameen. Aqeemus salaah!