**“RAMADAN AND THE QURAN”**

(A lecture by nouman ali khan)

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنْ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمْ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلاَ يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (البقرة: 185)

AOA WRBK

I was given the topic of Ramadan and the Quran and actually there is only one ayah about this topic. And it is situated in Surah Baqarah. In a regular series of Duroos on surah baqarah you have spent quite some time on this ayah and discussed some background about it. In this lecture, I hope to discuss with you three things about this ayah. One of it is the placement of this ayah. This ayah is in the latter (second half) of Surah Baqarah and there is a logical progression. The story begins with the beginning of Surah Baqarah and we reach this point when Ramadan is given to the Ummah. So I wanna share with you how we get to this point in this Surah. How Allah az zawajal builds the argument and finally reveals it to us this incredible gift. And the second thing Id like to do with you is to share with you certain incites about the ayah itself and then the third thing id like to share with you is a tip ; essentially a clue Allah gave us on how to make the most advantage of Ramadan and that’s the third thing Id like to share with you. So lets begin at the top.

Surah Baqarah is basically divided into two halves. The first half overwhelmingly deals with Bani Israel and the second half, overwhelmingly deals with the Muslim Ummah. And the point of it all, is that one nation has been , it's crimes have been listed and Allah az zawajal gives very convincing reason why that nation was taken away its status of being the highest ummah, the chosen Ummah. And once, he gives those reasons, then he justifies why there is a need for a new nation to be a role model for humanity and that is how we, i.e Muslim Ummah is inaugurated. But before this transition happens, Allah az zawajjal talks about Bani Israel actually. He began first by saying that all human beings were honored because the first human being is mentioned i.e Adam AS. In some sense, he was chosen over all other creation. Then within his children, his nation was chosen over all other nations I.e Bani Israel . So the kalam / speech begins about Bani Israel. And it goes out for some time and Allah az zawajjal also lists, in between the lines, the reason for which they don't accept Muhammad ur Rasool Allah SAW. It's because he is not, from the children of Israel.He is not from the children of that line, He is from the children of Ismael. Its other line.So he is not from us, then how can Prophethood come to him. We have a copyright. We have a trademark on Prophet-hood so it can't come outside our family. So what Allah does is, by the end of that converstaion, he says ‘ok ! He is not from your family, Is Ibrahim from your family? He basically poses that question to them. So a conversation begins about Ibrahim AS and, within that conversation, something really awesome happens. Within his children, the child that they believe in the most, the one that they take pride in the most is Yaqub AS. The jews, they take the most pride in Yaqoob AS.the reason for that is the other name for Yaqub is Israel. Thats the name they have for their entire nation .They call themselves, the children of Israel. They could call themselves the children of Ibrahim AS. But they don't. So what specifically Allah mentions about Ibrahim AS is a couple of things . One thing He mentions is that Yaqub AS wass reaching his death bed he was about to die and he gathered all his 12 sons . And Allah asks the question

أَمْ كُنتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي

 “Were you witness when death came to Yaqub ? When he said to his children, who are you going to be worshipping after me?” (Quran 2:133)

You might be thinking how is this all linked to Ramadan.Just wait and see.It's all connected . So Yauqb AS, at his death bed, says to his children , I'm about to die so whom are you going to worship after me? . His sons respond by saying , (His own children said) :

قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

 (We will worship the God of your fathers Ibrahim and ISMAEL. ) Quran 2:133”

Jews accuse Ismael AS of being someone we don't take from. But the original sons of Israel (Yaqub AS) said, we will follow the legacy of Ibrahim and Ismael and Ishaq. Before they even mention their own grandfather, they mention their grandfather's brother Ismael AS, they mention him first “Ilahan wahidan” : I.e there's only gonna be one God .when they say children of israel we think of a nation but the people around the bed of yaqoob AS are the actual children of israels these are his sons, these are the original sons of israel. What words came out of their mouth They said “ wa nahnu la hu muslimoon” I.e We are going to be Muslims only for Allah. Quran 2:133 The sons of Israel said that we are going to be –MUSLIMS. The word Islam came out of their mouth. Allah reminds the Jews that Islam is not something new to them – why are you saying so? You say that you will follow your fathers? Fine! Your own fathers said that they will follow the legacy of Ismael also. Actually they mentioned Ismael before they even mentioned Ishaq and they said that they are going to be Muslims . So whats the hold up? What's the problem now?

So first they are introduced to Ibrahim AS , in this way. So they understand that their criticism that Muhammad SAW (ma'aa z Allah) is not from our family . Allah says yes , he is from your family. He is from Ismael. And if you are thinking Ismael is not worth much , well your own fathers said he was worth a lot. They honored him first. Now, another point: Allah didn't just tell us about that du'a . Allah went on until something else very critical about Ibrahim AS in this conversation. He told us :

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنْ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ

“When Ibrahim AS was raising the foundations of the house along with Ismael. (Quran 2:127)”

What house was he building? The kaaba. So now the Jews even recognize that Ibrahim built this house and not with the help of Ishaq but with the help if Ismael. So they know if he built it with Ismael , it cant be somewhere else , it has to be in Arabia. And then , after that, Allah reveals

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنْ النَّاسِ مَا وَلاَّهُمْ عَنْ قِبْلَتِهِمْ

“The idiots , the fools are going to say, how come they change their qibla ?” (Quran 2:142 ). Muslims used to pray towards Al-Aqsa . Which means we accepted the capital of the Jews as our capital. But when Allah changes the capital, He didn't just change it. First he said that Ibrahim built the Kaaba and then He changed the Qibla .

And so now, the Muslims are praying in a different direction. When this happens, what we learn from the Seerah of Prophet SAW is that the members of Bani Israel I.e Jewish community were really angry. They were very offended. They actually started complaining

“مَا وَلاَّهُمْ عَنْ قِبْلَتِهِمْ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَ

“what turned them around?” (Quran 2:142),

“Why did they turn the other way?” They didnt even say “What turned them away from OUR qibla”? . They rather say “What turned them away from THEIR Qibla”?. Its their Qibla too guys! You know what that tells us? Deep down inside, They knew this Prophet SAW is true. And they knew that if Allah is changing the direction then it means that Allah has decided to honor the sons of Ismael. Because the sons of Ishaaq have lost it. They messed up way too much. So they couldn't accept that. To make this point a little clear, I'll tell you something I have shared with you before. A non-Muslim sees you praying at the airport, whether you praying north, east, south, west, you are praying left, right do they have a problem with that? They don’t care. Why this guy is praying to a chair, i don’t understand whether you face a window, a chair, a wall it doesn’t matter to them they wouldn’t be offended by your change of direction. WHY? Because that’s not your religion, that’s not their religion, its not their business. The fact that the jews of Madina were so offended that the qibla changed, they knew this is the right religion and they got very upset about it. By being upset they showed their foolishness so ALLAH says سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ , He says, the fools said because they gave it up. Why they turned their direction?

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“Tell them ALLAH owns the east and the west, He guides whoever He wants to the right path.”

Wonderful, ALLAH guides, ALLAH tells He does what He wants. He has the authority to change the direction, to change the capital. Now, when a nation is formed, when a nation is freed then they declared a capital and their flag is raised and they are officially declared a new country. You can’t have a country until you have a capital. So the capital is now declared. The new capital of islam is Makkah which means officially we are a new nation so its very logical that the next ayah in the surah

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطً

“That is how we made you a middle nation”.

Congratulations, you are a new nation. ALLAH azza wa jall gave us that honor. He made us a new nation. Now we are a new nation, the question arises is that only a Qibla that makes us a new nation?or is it something deeper? or is it something else? Salaat was there before as a matter of fact fasting was there before too. Jews had fasting also, they had salaat also. But something is new about this nation. They have been given the final message of ALLAH. What month was the final book of ALLAH revealed? RAMADAN. The jews accept the Taurat they refused to accept the Quran. This is a new nation and the reason it’s a new nation is that it has the final book. So the month is which it was revealed should be the month of celebration, to celebrate us as a new nation and the reason for you should celebrate this month is that this is the month of Quran, the month that made you a new nation. So the first thing that make us a new nation is the change of qibla, the second thing that make us a new nation that we should officially inaugurate the commem…….ceremony of the Quran and Allah declares that to be Ramadan. So now finally we get to these ayahs. The point of these ayat in the history was to put things in perspective. You people are a new nation and you should celebrate being the honoured nation of ALLAH and that’s celebration’s name is Ramadan. We think of celebration now.a.days, we think of Eid, actually before that celebration the true celebration is actually Ramadan itself. For a lot of Muslims today because our understanding of religion is deteriorated so much, Ramadan is like the first three days of celebration then its exhaustion and INSHA’ALLAH now Eid is coming ok okk…..But Ramadan itself is supposed to be the celebration. Now as we get into these ayats , before ALLAH gave us Ramadan, there is one ayat of Ramadan in quran, but there is another ayat of fasting before too

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

(Al-Baqarah, 183)

But they are about fasting by most scholars opinion that don’t have to do with Ramadan itself.

Fasting is made mandatory on you just like it was on those who came before you. (Al-Baqarah, 183) In other words yours days of fasting and the Jews days of fasting are the same.Originally the Prophet (SAWW) used to fast the same days as the Jews used to fast, the format of the fasting was the same. But now you have to have a new month. The next ayah comes....ayyamam maaduudaat, maadudaat means less than 10 days. But we know Ramadan is how many days of fasting? its 30 days so ALLAH says ‘shahru ramazan’ the month of Ramadan

All of us ALHAMDULILLAH experience the month of Ramadan in our lives multiple times what is the first thing that comes in the mind of a average Muslim when they think of Ramadan, FASTING, actually not fasting, suhoor and iftaar, that’s what comes in our mind. What is the first thing ALLAH wanted us to know about Ramadan

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

The first thing he told us about the ayah, the month of Ramadan is the one in which Quran was sent down, there is no mention of fasting yet. So now the Muslim knows the thing that make us different that Quran that incredible gift of ALLAH that was revealed in this month which is better than every other month automatically, this book is better than all previous revelations, it’s the ultimate revelation, the final revelation of ALLAH azaa wajall, this month must be the best month of all. Muslims haven’t heard about the fasting yet but they know that this is the best month. Now may be the next word gonna tell us about fasting

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ

Quran is a guidance for people, the conversation no more about Ramadan its about Quran. The Quran is so important in this ayah that the subject of month of Ramadan is stopped and the conversation began about the Quran itself. You should re-introduce the Quran. What ALLAH says about Quran in this ayah. He says huddalinnas its a guidance for people, do Muslims already know that? Yes. Waa bayyinaatin minnal huda it has multiple proofs and multiple clear teachings that come from guidance. Did muslims already know that? Yes. Wal furqan and it make distinguish between right and wrong, a standard between right and wrong. Did Muslims already know that? Yes. Everything ALLAH said about Quran in this ayah is something the Muslims already knew it. What is ALLAH telling us? When this month comes , you are getting reintroduce to the Quran. Its like you are coming to the Quran for the first time all over again, everytime. You should feel like you just became a new Muslim. Every Muslim should feel he just became a Muslim. When somebody just becomes a Muslim they really wanna read the Quran, what does God says to me? There is a curiosity. ALLAH wants us to have that fresh take on the Quran every single month. We have to give up not just for fasting not just to get to food, most of us end up gaining weight in Ramadan. We have to.....our appetite for Quran itself. This year i’ll be introduce to the Quran like i have never been introduced before, i’ll recite the Quran like i have never recited before. I’ll read the same ayat like i have never read them before. This is the beauty of these ayat. The jews believed that their book was the guidance for all of mankind?NO. they believed that Tuarh was guidance only for them. ALLAH says,you, new nation you don’t just keep it yourself, this will be guidance for everyone. ALLAH doesn’t say,”guidance for you people” this means, this month i’ll learn the Quran, i’ll reintroduce myself to it but i know for a fact that this book will not walk itself over to the people, who will have to give it to the people? You and I will. Because it is guidance not just for you and me. It is guidance for the people. The month of Ramadan is a reminder that we have to share Quran with humanity, just in the words, huddallinaas. When you share the Quran with humanity they will ask for proof, they ask why do you believe this is the word of god? Whats your proof? Whats your evidence?Give me something?Don’t they say that? ALLAH says, Waa bayyinaatin minnal huda Bayyinaat means Proofs, clear evidences that come from guidance, not only does it guides people it proves to them that it is a guidance too, you don’t have to come up with some outside evidence, the evidence is inside the Quran. Anybody with decency, human decency is going to see that. They are going to come to this book with the right intention and they will find guidance and they will proof that this is guidance. And once they accept those proofs, it will tell them which way is wrong and which way is right, Wal Furqaan. It will separate right and wrong. So it started with an invitation for people, guidance for people, it will prove itself to them, they will pick the right way from the wrong way because it draw line for them, don’t do this and don’t do that, live this way, don’t live this way, SUBHANALLAH.this is the awesome power of the QURAN. But the ayah didn’t begin with the Quran, the ayah begin with the month of Ramadan.

Now ALLAH says, ok now lets go back to the month. After this introduction, lets go back to the month of Ramadan

Then whoever among you witnesses the Month, whoever around is live to see the month, he didn’t say FASOMUU, he said , whoever witness the month.

The people who became muslim, when they are taking oath its called as Shahadah, when the followers of Issa AS belived in him, they said,” ask ALLAH, fatktubna maa’ashaahideen so he should be witnesses against people, the idea of witnessing the truth. When somebody takes shahadah its like they are a new Muslim, they just became Muslim. ALLAH says you will be witnesses to the month. The month itself will be your shahadah. You will be testifying to the month. And the other thing is If you live to see the month? In other words, how imam sometimes make dua, yaa ALLAH give us the month of Ramadan , the month of Ramadan is not cheap, you have to earn it. May be ALLAH decides you will not get this month, I don’t get this month, a day comes before we even get there. So If you are lucky enough, you are gifted enough by ALLAH that you got to see the month of Ramadan then you should celebrate. You should be so happy that you got to see another Ramadan and here how you celebrate it. ALLAH’s declaration of celebration is fasting. We are the guardians of that revelation. If we really want to internalize our revelation. We also have to fast. There is a relationship between taking the Quran in your heart and fasting. ALLAH made that connection himself. If you come in the month of Ramadan, in order to get closer to the Quran and ofcourse you are fasting at the same time, there will be a connection created. Your body will starve and your soul will feed. Its gonna be awesome. Usually we feed our body and we starve our soul. In this month we are starve our body and feed our soul. 11 months of imbalanced will balance again. This is the opportunity we have been given.

Now, did we fast before Ramadan came? Did the Muslims fast before Ramadan came? Yes. And ALLAH gave some rules. ALLAH says if you are sick then you can make up the days. But may be you are not sick and you don’t wanna make it up, you can pay some fidyah. The one who has the power to fast doesn’t want to fast but he can afford, he can just give a maskeen some food, he can feed a maskeen and pay for his fasting that way. This was the rule before Ramadan. So you had two ways of making up fast. First way you make it way, second way you give fidyah. How many days did we use to fast? 9. So there were three things that were easy about fasting before Ramadan. You can make it up, you can give fidyah and its just 9 days.

Ramadan came, Ramdan has its own rules. ALLAH says, whoever witnesses the month should fast it, not should fast in it. If I say,’ I fast in Ramdan’ means I fast some days in Ramadan. If I say ‘ I fast Ramadan’ it means the whole Ramadan. Its not 9 days, its 30 days. So its harder or easier now? *Its harder.* If you miss a fast you had two options originally, first to make up or to give fidyah. Now ALLAH says, whoever is sick or travelling he has to make up in other days. Now its more days and if you miss it you have to make it up. *Its harder.* Its more days, they are altogether and you have to make them up if you miss, there is no other option. This was easier before now its getting harder, ALLAH says, ‘ALLAH wants ease for you and He doesn’t want difficulty for you.’ And by the way if I say to my child,’ I want ease for you, I want things to be easier for you’. Then I don’t want things difficult for you. But if my child is really worried and I give him a lot of encouragement, I want things to be easy for you, I don’t want them difficult for you.

Taqwa means consciousness, the original word means *‘protection’*.Taqwa actually means to protect yourself. If you are wearing a bullet proof waist then you are engaged in an act of Taqwa. If you pack your bag properly before you go on a journey, that’s also Taqwa. You have your passport, make sure you have enough money etc, etc, that’s also a form of Taqwa. Because you are protecting yourself before landing into trouble. Taqwa with ALLAH means I’m gonna protect myself from doing sins, from looking in the wrong directions, from saying wrong thing, from wasting my time. This is also Taqwa. Taqwa is mentioned a couple of 100 times in the holy Quran. If ALLAH talks about Taqwa that many times.

How many times you tell your teenager to do your homework? do your homework, do your homework, do your homework, did you do your homework? Hey, by the way do it. Why do you need to tell him so many times? Because he doesn’t do it, he doesn’t listen. You know better, because you are a father. ALLAH repeats Taqwa a couple of 100 times in the Quran does that tell you something? Who is he talking to? You and me. He keep saying it, He keep saying it, He keep saying it, what does it mean logically? We don’t really do it. If you did it, how many times he have to mention it? ALLAH says fast in Ramadan one time in Quran, Muslims fasts generally or not? Yeahhh…. He doesn’t have to tell it many times, fast in Ramadan, fast in Ramadan, fast in Ramadan, its done, finish. He says, have Taqwa, 100 times. So which one is harder, fasting in Ramadan ir Taqwa? Taqwa is hard. There is a ayah about Ramadan and there is a ayah about fasting before it. Lets talk something about fasting first, ALLAH says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

 You were given fasting so that you can get TAQWA. You can develop Taqwa hopefully by the act of fasting. What is the connection between me not drinking and eating and developing TAQWA? Not drinking and eating is something physical, you feel the effects of it physically. But TAQWA is something spiritual. ALLAH says do something physical and ALLAH will give you spiritual. For eg. If you fasted before and there is a hard day, you are with your co worker and he is having water next to you, and looking at him your throat is begging, your throat is screaming at you, *“take some water”.* You are starving . right before iftaar time , you are sitting at the table, and you can hear the fries frying and the fruit chaat is being put on the table you are looking at it and then at the clock….:’) your stomach says, “*I’m hungry, give me”*. Your throat says,” *I’m thirsty, drink me.’*’But your heart says,*” hey, you can’t have it before magrib”.* You heart has more fear and says to the belly,*” hey no”.* There is a fight going on inside you. For thirty days fight goes on inside you. For thirty days my heart wins. For thirty days, I beat my stomach, I beat my throat, I beat my eyes and I beat my ears. Ear says, *“com’on just a single song, just one movie.”* Even those who are addicted to movies, they cut it down because its Ramadan. Some of you go to parties which are not halal, but in Ramadan you cut them down. Your feet says, *“lets go”.* But you heart says, “*No its Ramadan”*. There is a battle going on inside you and for thirty days ALLAH gives you the power to win. If anyone of you have joined the work out programs like, *“lose weight in 30 days, become a monster in 80 days.”* What happens to the most people? They watch 1st episode, *“come’on stay with me”* they are done after one day. Do muslims quit fasting after one day? NO. they stay 30 days. If they just understood why they were fasting? Most of the muslims just don’t know why they are fasting? We have to do fasting in order to develop TAQWA. If they remember that, the understood that, if I remember that then my heart has been trained for 30 days to defeat the rest of temptations. The TAQWA of ALLAH has won for 30 days. That’s what you call a training program. During training, fire department has training, police department has training, military has training and during that training they pretend like that building is on fire and you have to go , fake criminals pointing guns at you and you have to shoot at them. But during criminal they don’t actually put you infront of a criminal shooting. During training its easier for you. So the real challenges are not given to you, you are given similar situations but its made easier for you because the fire fighters are not actually fighting the fire, simulation. The pilot is flying the plan on soft…before you goes up in the air. Does ALLAH take and make something easy for us so this fight is little easier for us, so we can develop this muscle before it crushed. He locks the shaitan for 30 days. So this training is without distractions. Its easy you can build this on your own and now you are done, go. 11 months deal with shaitan. And after 11 months, the war is going on between me and shaitan, actually between my heart who is already being trained by shaitan, who is already being listening to shaitan for a long time. Only that one month training then he is back on the battle field for 11 months. Is it hard gonna injure in 11 months? So you need to come back for more training, for more healing. The hearts are allowed to heal in Ramadan for 30 days. Its 30 days shaitan vacation. Its beautiful. Its so brilliant that ALLAH (azza wajal) gave us that. The connection between fasting and building TAQWA.

ALLAh says,

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلاَ يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ

And I gave you this month so that you may complete the count. Why did you tell us the whole month? So that you may complete the full training period for 30 days. Some of us are in a work who requires certain kind of cerification, we have to have a 30 day training or 20 day training, if we leave after 10 days we wont get our certificate. That’s not enough. If you want to get that certificate then you have to finish that 30 days and by the way whenever one of you earns a certificate, do you celebrate or not? *“I learned this language or that language, I got certified in this or certified in that”*. Celebration happens after training. Finish your training then celebrate. Muslim celebrate, what do they scream?

ALLAH says,

وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ

So that you may declare greatness of ALLAH, which is the quranic expression of celebrating out loud. What happens in EID, what do we say while we are going to musallah, its ALLAHU AKBAR, ALLAHU AKBAR. Its beautiful. We are celebrating that we have finished our training. Its not a time to be sad. Ramadan is over you shouldn’t feel sad. ALLAH tells us you should be happy. ALLAH says, I’ll teach you how to celebrate? Some scholar says what does that mean? We are supposed to take different roads to EID prayer. We are supposed to have EID sweet, we are supposed to wake up early for EID prayer and we are supposed to do these takabeers and recite them aloud. This is the guidance of ALLAH. ALLAH even taught you how to celebrate. Not just a party but how to party.

 But at the end of all, He says,

وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

And hopefully, may be, as a result of that you will become grateful.Why does ALLAH says so that you should be grateful?

And the word LALLA is more comprehensive, it captures *“may be you will be grateful or hopefully you become grateful or so that you become grateful”.* It means if you fast for the whole month, it doesn’t guaranteed that you will become grateful but the hope is there. The best case cenareo is there. Somebody goes through an entire course program doesn’t guaranteed that he will gradute. The eventual outcome of the Ramadan is that you should become grateful. Shukar exists when you respond to a favour. You don’t thank anyone unless something is done good to you.

What are we thanking ALLAH for at the end of Ramadan?

**First gift,** we learned to be grateful for the Quran, this month should be so full of QURAN, you have such a new taste for the Quran in this month that at the end of this month you say, “I thank ALLAH for giving me the gift of the Quran, I’m so grateful for the Quran”

**2nd gift**, I thank ALLAH for giving me the month free of shaitan so that I can recite Quran in peace. “When you recite Quran seek refuge of ALLAH from shaitan”(Al-Quran) This month you get free access to the Quran, distraction free access to the Quran, you should be grateful to that. You should be grateful that ALLAH allow you to witness the entire month then take you before then so these are the gifts

GIFTS OF ALLAH TO MUSLIMS IN RAMADAN:

Something ALLAH gave us a bonus, sometimes we complete our training and get a kind of gifts, in addition to your diploma. In the next ayah ALLAH doesn’talk to us, He talks to Prophet (SAWW).

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِي إِذَا دَعَانِي فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

((البقرة: 186

When my slave asks you about me, first of all ALLAH didn’t say, if they ask you about me, He said when they ask you about me. In other word, ALLAH is waiting for us to ask. A father who is hoping his son come back, he didn’t say if my son come back. He says when my son come back. A father whose son is on the military operation, he is gone. He says, in three months, when my son comes back insha’allah. He doesn’t say if my son comes back. In the word **“when”** there is a hope. In the word **“if”** there is actually a kind of hopelessness. Allah says, “when my slave ask you about me”. In other words ALLAH is waiting in this ayah for you to ask about me. ALLAH is waiting, his slave should ask about me. And they come and ask the Prophet (SAWW), will ALLAH forgive me, will ALLAH accept my dua. What does ALLAH love? What ALLAH wants from me? The sahaba come and ask the Prophet (SAWW). Now what would you tell them? ALLAH is talking to the Prophet (SAWW) in this ayah. In Arabic you can expect

 فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ Faqul lahum وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي

If my slave ask you about me then tell them, I’m near. The Prophet (SAWW) should tell them. What ALLAH do, when my slave ask you about me,( I’ll talk to them directly) I’m near. ALLAH didn’t even ask the Prophet to tell them, ALLAH tell them himself. He in the middle of that conversation its though he was waiting for the time when you would ask about him and when you would ask about him he will talk to you directly and tell you directly in the Quran, I’m near. I’m so near you don’t even need to talk about it through the Prophet (SAWW) I’ll talk to you directly.The Prophet (SAWW) was not even mentioned anymore. And don’t have any doubt about it, you might thought really is ALLAH going to talk to me?i’m near. For example, Some of you are working in a big corporation, you have CEO he has got 500 employees, 1000 employees. Chances are that you will never meet him. And if you meet him, you will run into him, he is taking a tour of your campus or your office and you shake hand with him how long will that conversation last? 5 seconds hardly. But you don’t get much time with somebody who is more important and somebody who is responsible for a lot of people, the more they are responsible for they are not close to you. What’s the lowest job in the world? It’s the slave. The biggest distance between the employer and employee is the master and slave. Allah is the highest that can ever be and we as ibaad as salve are the lowest one, we can ever be, logically speaking that is the greatest distance and ALLAH says when the lowest ones asks about the highest one tell him I’m near, Subhanallah. Tell him, I’m near, I’m not far. When you talk to somebody important do you have to get an appointment? “I don’t like something OBAMA said in speech, I should call him am I gonna get through?” NO,NO, I’M NOT. Because somebody is important you can’t get through. One of my children, I want to take him to the specialist, and for specialist,there is a waiting list, so I can’t just go to the office, I need to get an appointment and they give you an appointment three months later and if you miss it by 10 minutes, another three months because they are busy. That’s not on my schedule, that’s on their schedule. The more important someone is, the more busy their schedule is, I’v to make time for them they don’t have to make time for me. It would be really ridiculous at me if I met a scholar, one of the world’s great scholar for example, “I had a chance to meet sheikh moulana Hassan akram nadwi (may ALLAH protect him) in London, it was really honor to meet him, one of the great muhadissin of the world, I’m not gonna go him and say to him hey by the way talk to me here is my no. its ridiculous.” Somebody is gonna meet president and say to him, “just give me a call, leave a message, I’ll get back to you when I can” . it doesn’t make any sense. Who should make the appointment? The master or the slave? The slave should make the appointment. ALLAH says,” I’ll respond to the call, whenever he calls me, I’ll answer.” The ayah begain I’m waiting for you to ask about me, talk about me , I’m near. Then he goes on and say, you doesn’t matter when you call me I’ll answer. Who’s gonna be more important than ALLAH? And who has gonna lower status than you and me? And ALLAH says, I’m waiting for you, anytime. And I’ll respond immediately. But there is something in the middle. ALLAH says, I respond to the call of the ***caller***. There is a difference between *I respond to the call of any caller* and *I respond to the call of the caller.* When you say any caller, a caller the caller is not known. When you say the caller, the caller is known. How many people calling ALLAH, so manyyyy. If anyone of you ask a question, I’ll say,” a person asked, one of the student asked”. Its anonymous. ALLAH says none of you is anonymous. All of you are not A your are THE. ALLAH knows you particularly I’ll respond to your call individually. He doesn’t say oh “a slave from texas called make dua for him.” No, that one right there, he called. He made that dua is very particular. I’ll call even if this guy is not even used to making dua, once in a blue moon out of some crazy thing that happened in his life he decided to make dua out of by accident even that guy, even if he called me one time, I’ll answer him. So no one can say well I don’t even pray, I’m so messed up, ALLAH is not gonna answer my dua. ALLAH says you just try once, just try me once, I’m waiting, where are you.

 And then ALLAH hears, SUBHANALLAH. ALLAH said I respond to the single call of the caller. When you say caller, yaa ALLAH, RABBI, does that mean caller is a certain standard, could a caller be a good person or a bad person? SURE. Caller is a caller, it could be anybody. ALLAH didn’t say I respond to the call of the righteous one, the worshipping one, the good one, the knowledgeable one. He didn’t put any condition on the caller except that he is a caller. So it doesn’t matter what situation you have? How messed up or how bad you are? This invitation is open as long you are a caller. And to ALLAH you are not a caller you are the caller even if that’s all you did, you never made a single act of ibadah in your life, you just decided to turn to ALLAH once he still respond,” whenever he calls me”. Whatever he does, its upto HIM. This ayah is one of the most beautiful ayah in the Quran about the DUA. It is mentioned in the conversation about Ramdan which is not yet over, the next ayat are also about Ramadan. 6 ayat about fasting, in the middle of that ALLAH changed that subject and made the subject dua. What is ALLAH telling us? ***MAKE A LOT OF DUA IN RAMADAN***. Celebrate the Quran, fast, ask ALLAH, ask ALLAH, ask ALLAH, keep asking, keep asking.

In every relationship there are two sides, there is master and there is slave. So far ALLAH said this is what I’m willing for you to do, what are you willing to do? Then they should atleast try to respond to me ALLAH use the word ***Ujeebu*** for himself, I respond immediately. He didn’t say ***Falujeebu Li***, he says ***fal yastajeebu li*** , then they should atleast try, they should atleast want. ALLAH is not asking you to be perfect. ALLAH says atleast try man. I’m giving you so much, I’m asking for you to just try only. Do you atleast want to respond to ALLAH. I’m asking you for a couple of things, very little. Just respond. And ALLAH already you might say what ALLAH wants from me is too hard, iss too difficult that’s already taken care

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلاَ يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ

and they should continue to believe in me, believe that I’m listening to that dua, a person gets depressed he might think that ALLAH is not listening to my dua. I keep making dua and nothing is changing. At the end of the aya ALLAH puts what we really need, jus believe in me and know I’m listening immediately. Believe this ayah, believe what ALLAH is telling you and if you really believe in that you will be living a straight life so that they may be straight, you will have a guided life, you will stay away from trouble in life. ALLAH said fasting gives taqwa, Ramdan gives gratitude and dua sets you straight. Three connections made. If you feel guidance is missing in your life, you are missing DUA.

May ALLAH make us a people of Dua before and especially during Ramadan and after Ramadan. May ALLAH make this month truly a month of Quran for all of us. May ALLAH forgives our short comings in previous months of fasting. And may ALLAH give us the strength the energy, the concentration to listen to the beautiful recitation of the Quran in the entire month of Quran. May ALLAH give us patience with each other and not allow little things to distract us from what we really hear to do in the house of ALLAH.

***Barakallah walakum fil quranil hakeem wala faani wa ayyiakum bil ayaati wa zikril hakeem***

***Wa salam.o.alaikum wa rahamtullahi wa barakatuhu***