**Ramadan, a gift for Muslims**

**A discussion by Nouman ‘Ali Khan**



The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an, a 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.

As-salamu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh. (Arabic).

inshaAllah wa Ta’ala, this evening I like to share with you as some of you probably already deciphered some reminders that will help me and you prepare for Ramadan. Ramadan is around the corner and it’s a good time to remind ourself of some important lessons in regards to it.

I hope to do three things in this talk with you today.

**The first of those things is probably the most ignored in the conversation about Ramadan. The placement of the ayat of the Ramadan in the Qur’an, the Qur’an talks about Ramadan in one place, Baqarah that’s it Surah Baqarah and only mentions it one time but where is it mentioned and how is it part of the greater teachings of Surah Baqarah? How is it connected to everything that’s followed? It’s almost like a combination of several things. So I wana share with you, how we get to this point in Baqarah. So we get a gain of little bit of a bigger prospective. So we understand that Ramadan of part of the larger lesson and larger wisdom that Allah A’zza Wa Jal revealed in His book. That’s the first thing I would like to do.**

**The second thing I like to do, is pay attention to the ayat themselves and may be extrapolate some lessons from the ayah itself in the way in which Allah talks about Ramadan. We all know what the month is, what its significance is but I wana highlight exactly how Allah Himself talks about it and may be help ourselves drive some benefits from that.**

**Finally I wana share with you that in this passage, the six ayat that are the entire section of the Qur’an on fasting. Like the entire wisdom of fasting and the month of fasting, all of it captured in these six ayat in Baqarah. Within these ayat there is a particular offering from Allah, There is a gift from Allah embedded inside. There is an opportunity. So I wana talk about that opportunity inshaAllah wa Ta’ala at the end.**

So those are the three things I wana share with you today.

Surah Baqarah is divided basically in two conversations. It is the biggest Surah of Qur’an but it’s divided in to two conversations. One of them is previous nation and their mistakes. Overwhelmingly, the first half of Surah Baqarah talks about Banee Israil, the children of Israil and the mistake they made. So the Surah talks about two conversations. One “Banee Israil” and the other “The Muslims”. The first half of the Surah deals overwhelmingly with Banee Israil, the sons of israil. How Allah favored them, how many monumental mistakes they made. There was a whole list of counts, just like a criminal goes to court and they say you are being charged with a count of this crime, this crime, this crime etc and at the end when all the crimes are listed what comes after that in court? The verdict. So we are expecting at the end of entire conversation [conversations of Surah Baqarah], what’s the verdict. Within that list of crimes, I wana highlight one thing. The jews of Madina rejected the Prophet (saw) by overwhelming majority on the basis that he was not from children of israil. He was not from the son’s of israil. He was from the son’s of ismail. That was their final basis. But toward the end of the conversation with the jews, you know when the crimes were being listed, Allah says fine. You don’t think he is from the son’s of israil then let’s talk about israil himself. Israil (as), his other name is Ya’qûb and Ya’qûb’s farther name is ishaq and ishaq’s father name is Ibrahim. Allah talking to jews saying, Ok you wana say that he is not from the children of israil and israil is your family, So Muhammad(saw) is not from your family. Is Ibrahim from your family? I mean they call themselves children of israil but is it wrong that they are also children of Ibrahim, is that true, sure. So actually first Allah talks about great grandfather, the grandfather actually, Ibrahim (as) then He says Ibrahim has a lot in common with israil[Ya’qûb] and Ya’qûb (as) of all the things Allah could have highlighted, there is one particular thing I wana share with you. By the way all this conversation is about Ramadan, you will see. The whole thing is about Ramadan. So, Ya’qûb (as) is at his death bed and his sons are surrounding his death bed. He is about to die, according to Qur’an and he wants to give parting advice to his kids. How many sons did Ya’qûb had? How many sons israil had? Twelve. Remember twelve sons of israil become twelve tribes of israil. So these are the actual sons of israil. You know when we say children of israil, we think of twelve tribes. We are talking now in this Ayah about the actual father and sons of israil. They are surrounding him and he is leaving them with partying advice. Lets listen to this partying advice:

Surah Baqarah, ayah # 133



Or were you witnesses when death approached Ya’qûb (Jacob)



when he said to his sons,



What will you worship after me?



They said, "We will worship your God



and the God of your fathers



Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac

Before they mention they own grandfather, who they mention before that? Ismail. Qur’an arguing you claim to be sons of israil, but sons of israil had more respect for ismail then they even had for their own grandfather, they mention him first. First they mention Ibrahim then they mention ismail then they mention ishaq. How are you turned off by the fact that he is a son of ismail. What’s wrong with you. Ismail or Ishaq. He is one God, He is always been one God. All the children of Ibrahim believed in the same one. It also chronology because ismail is the older son and that’s important too. It’s chronology. The most ancient figure Ibrahim then under him ismail and under him ishaq then Ya’qûb’s our father and then us[children of israil]. So there is a chronology and the chronology is important too. You know why? Because the son to be sacrificed even the biblical version sacrificed your only son. Well the younger one couldn’t have ever been the only son because you know the christen argument is the son to be sacrificed was ishaq but actually if there was ever a time where there was only son, it was ismail. The Jews tried to circumvent that. They developed an alternative view and said no ismail was the illegitimate son which is an accusation against Ibrahim (as) and ismail (as). Allah says let me tell you how to resolve that problem. I will tell you what your own fathers[actual children of israil], they themselves said if they didn’t honor ismail (as) then why would they mention his name. They themselves mention his name.



one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."

The word they used to describe their religion, sons of israil describing their religion to their father said, we are muslims. They call themselves muslim. These are the closing arguments of Allah(swt) with the Israelites. You have always been muslims and when Muhammad (saw) is given islam. He is given what you were already given. You wana be true to your tradition? Nothing is truer to your own tradition then islam itself. Look at what Ya’qûb (as) himself asked his children. He tested his children, israil asked those questions to his children. He says those still Ya’qûb (as) questions are still alive. How are you gona answer them? Are you gona answer the same way you own father answered them or you came up with your own answers? Who is true to their tradition and who is abandon their tradition. Allah flips the question around on them. It’s awesome and once he did that case has been established and then no more arguments necessary to be made. It’s done, its finished.

So now what is Allah do, Allah starts talking about Ibrahim again. He goes back to Ibrahim and he goes to the son they refuse to honor. He talks about Ibrahim with his son ismail and they were on a project together. Father and son were on a project together. You could call it a construction project.

Surah Baqarah, ayah # 127



when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael

Now ismail obviously was left in the arab lands. He was left in the city of Makkah. It’s already understood that this construction project is not happening in Jerusalem. The construction project is happening in Makkah and they know that too and since they already have respect for Ibrahim (as), he is building this house which house is being referred to? The Ka'bah. Allah talks about the building of Ka'bah and He says this Ka'bah was built by your father’s too jews[sons of israil]. He built this Ka'bah along with his son ismail which your own father’s honored. That’s Allah mentions first. He establishes the legitimacy of the house first. Once he established the legitimacy of the house of Allah [The Ka'bah], then He tells the Ummah,

And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer]

This is your new kibla. You don’t pray in the direction of Jerusalem any more. Many of you may not know that muslim until the Allah revealed the Ayat in madina, until then the prophet Muhammad (saw) used to pray towards Al-Aqsa [Jerusalem]. He used to pray towards Jerusalem like his predecessor Musa (as), Essa (as), the major prophets, they all prayed in that direction and since the Qur’an is the confirmation of previous scriptures. It didn’t contradict that until Nooh instructions came, the project Muhammad (saw) used to pray in same direction. Now, you what we say, the capital is islam is makkah. Politically things can change. Socially things can change. One thing will never change in islam. The capital of islam will always be Makkah. When you talk about the capital, you are talking about nation. Yes? And before it was Makkah, What was the first capital of islam before that? The earlier capital of islam was Jerusalem. And again a capital is a symbolic of a nation. To have a capital, you have to have a nation first and then the nation has its capital. Isn’t that makes sense? When Allah says Now you have to pray in this direction, it is as though Allah is saying you have new capital and if you have a new capital that must mean you are a new nation. It is extremely logical that right after when Allah talks about us having a new capital, He says:

 Surah Baqarah ayah#143 :



That’s how we made you a balance nation

The conversation about us being a nation comes right after we have been inaugurated with a capital. It’s a continuation of that conversation. Now here is the really interesting thing. Have any of you ever prayed in a public place? Like in Airport or school or anyone. So some people walk by you and see you pray. Like i tell you a funny story. A really good friend of mine. I can’t name him because this is gona be on youtube one day. So I can’t name him. We were in college and I always make sure I sit next to my friend. During that class there used to be Asar time. Before class started, Asar time hadn’t come in yet but by end of class Magrib has started. So we have to leave in the middle of class to go pray. So I am passed out as usual and my friend ping me and say Nauman Asar time. He gets me and we go and find an emptyclass room. We make wuddu and go into empty classroom. We start praying in Jamm’ah. I am leading the Jamm’ah for some reason and he is following and back is to the door. The door is closed as it is an empty classroom. Some girls were looking for an empty classroom for smoke. So whole bunch of girls giggling and walk into this room and we are in rukuh, facing away from them. They walk in and say what’s going on here and my friend got so nervous, he got up from rukuh before me even though I was leading. But let me tell you, the reason I brought this story up, If you are praying in public, somebody who doesn’t belong to your religion a christen, a Jew or a Hindu, a atheist etc and if they see you pray north, east, south, west direction, Do they care? No, they don’t care. These muslims are crazy. They are praying towards car. They don’t care. It does not matter to them. It doesn’t make it difference to them. If the Jews of madina saw themselves as a separate religion then weather we pray towards Aqsa or we pray towards makkah. It doesn’t make any difference to them. You guys are misguided anyway, they would say. You guys aren’t on the right religion. You pray this way or that way, why do I care. But it so happens, that the moment Allah changed the Qibla, Muslims started praying towards Makkah, the Jewish community in medina was in an uproar.

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#142



What has turned them away from their qiblah

What’s wrong with them, What turned them away from their Qibla? Look at their language. What turned them away from their own direction? As though they are saying, that was their right direction. They didn’t just say “what turned them from the direction”. They said “What turned them from their direction”. Actually that was their direction too. They are offended by it. The fact that they are offended by it, in of itself prove that deep down inside they knew this is the right religion. They felt like they are still part of it and they can mess around with prophets. We have done this before. Why can’t we do it now? But when the capital changed, capital changed from the family of Ya’qûb to the family of ismail, the house built by Ibrahim along with ismail, they realized that they are declaring themselves a separate nation. So they got offended and in their offense, the fact that they got offended gave away that they are already accepting internally that this is a true message. That’s why Allah call them fools in that particular Ayah.

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#142



The foolish among the people will say, "What has turned them away from their qiblah,

Some fools from among the people are gona be in uproar, what turned them away from their Qibla? What turned them away from their direction? So, long story short at the end of all those crimes, Allah says you were the preferred nation. I gave you the opportunity to be the role model to the rest of humanity or what a nation, one nation under God looks like. That’s what the Israelites were told and you failed that opportunity [Allah said]. You squandered those resources and as a result you are being deposed from that position. Your capital is no longer the capital. The capital will go back to the house built by Ibrahim along with ismail. The muslims will now pray in that direction. They are a new nation and they are a new nation that musilms are told, now that responsibility of being role model to the humanity which used to be on them falls on you.

Surah Baqrah, Ayah# 143



We are a new nation. But what makes us a different from previous nation? Surah Baqarah began with that very point:

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#2

 This is the Book about which there is no doubt

This is the book in fact that’s the book that has no doubt init whatsoever. Which book is He referring to? Qur’an. Qur’an is what makes us a separate nation. Our capital is Makkah. Our constitution is Qur’an because the nation has to have a capital and also has to have a constitution. And since this constitution has been formed, the day constitution is ratified and nation is inaugurated, is there some sort of celebration in any society? Absolutely, for example we celebrate in this country, the declaration of independence. Every nation has something like that. Now what is Allah do to us. He said while he talks about Ramadan.

 Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an

You know the book that makes you a separate nation; it came down in month of Ramadhan. Allah didn’t say “The month of Ramadan is the one you suppose to fasting”. The month of ramadhan is the month of really heavy fried aftars. The month of ramadhan is the month of exhausting tarawi. The month of ramadhan is whatever. First definition of month of ramadhan, Qur’an came down in it. In other words, we are learning something very powerful about ramadhan. You know how every nation celebrates its independence. The 4th of july, Pakistani 14th of August, Indian 15th of August, 23rd March. The inauguration of this Ummah is not in one day rather its one month. You are now celebrating the fact that you are an Ummah as a result of this incredible constitution that came from the sky that is drafted by Allah himself, you don’t celebrate it for one day, you celebrate it for 30 days. **Ramadhan is the celebration that we are a new Ummah**. That’s what it is, first and far most. It’s recognition, that nation didn’t fulfill its responsibility and this nation will. First thing we gona recognize about ramadhan is it celebrates our status as a new Ummah. It’s the first thing and it’s incredible. Which muslim thinks like that anymore. We just think, Ramadhan great time to lose weight. Even though most of you end up gaining weight anyway because you over compensate.

Did you know that we prayed in the same direction as the Jews and we also fasted one the same days as Jews. Before ramadhan came, the Prophet (saw) used to fast on the same days as Jews days. Why? Because again our religion is a confirmation of previous scripture until our scripture, revelation from God doesn’t tell us to change things that were already in place, that were legitimate in of itself, the prophet (saw) will maintain those practices until he is told differently. So he maintained the fasting on certain days. Those were less than 10 days. Some argue 9 days.

Now the first Ayah is actually about fasting. Allah Says:

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#183

 O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous

Those of you who have faith, fasting is mandated on you just like on those who came before you. In other words your fasting is no different from their fasting. It is just like their fasting. This is the ayah before ramadhan about the fasting that we used to do before even ramadhan started. But I wana tell you something about this fasting before I go on.

**My second point about Ramadhan**. How many days did I say before ramadhan? Roughly 9. Allah says:

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#184



[Fasting for] a limited number of days.

They are just a handful of days. They say it’s just handful of days. So before ramadhan, we didn’t have to fast 30 days but we only have to fast little over a week. Allah calls it a few days. Is it easy or harder than ramadhan? 9 days are way easier

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#184

 So whoever among you is ill or on a journey [during them] - then an equal number of days [are to be made up].

Whoever of you is traveling or sick then they can make it up later days. If you missed those fasting days then you can them up later and your excuses are two, either health reasons or travel. You got two excuses. But there is another provision:

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#184



And upon those who are able [to fast, but with hardship] - a ransom [as substitute] of feeding a poor person [each day].

Those who can afford it and have the power to do so, also means those who had the power to fast but they were like, I don’t feel like it fasting, they can actually even pay for it later. They can feed an orphan as a compensation for not having fasted. So there were two ways you can make up a fast. What were the two ways where you can make up the fast? (1) you can make it up later day. (2) You can feed a poor person. And how many did I say? 9[nine]. Allah says about ramadhan:

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it

Whoever witnesses this month, should fast the entire month of it. Is that easier or harder? It’s harder. Now it’s 30 days versus 9 days. Then he says:

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days.

Whoever was traveling or sick he can make it up. So if you missed then what should you do? Make it up. What used to be option no 2? You can pay. That option is no longer mentioned. The option is taken away. So fasting is just gets easier or harder. Fasting just got harder and the option has taken away. The extra option of you just pay your way out of it is taken away. The moment you are thinking, man this is just got harder. Imagine those muslims back in the day where they used to fast 9 and now it’s 30 and its all of them and you can’t even pay your way out of it. They are thinking its hard, the very next ayah,

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship

Allah wants ease for you, He doesn’t want difficult for you. How incredible is that. I know what you are thinking. I think you think it’s gona be hard. Let me tell you, I don’t want any hardship for you. I want ease for you. That I will explain to you in a little bit. The first introduction to ramadhan is that it’s a celebration of new nation. The second introduction to ramadhan, Allah add Himself, Lets go through it bit by bit:

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



a guidance for the people

It is guidance for all people. What did the Israelites believe about their revelation? Their revelation Tawrat is a guidance for all people? No, it’s a guidance for who? Their own. Allah says No, this capital is just not your capital now, this is a capital of all those who believe and this revelation is not just a revelation for the believers. It is open invitation to all humanity, across ethnicities, across continents, across races, across genders and across generations. It’s an open invitation. It’s not like your restrictive view anymore. By the way, you know what that also means? If this is the month we are celebrating Qur’an, does all the humanity knows about the Qur’an? No and if we are celebrating the Qur’an by just using the word “Naas” in this ayah, Allah already implied that it is obligation of the muslim Ummah, they reminded in this month of the Qur’an that this is guidance of all people. Your job is to spread this word. Ramadhan is a reminder that Qur’an must be spread by the hands of muslims. It’s a reminder that we are obligated to share the world of Allah with humanity. Who thinks of ramadhan like that? First thing Allah said, it the month of ramadhan in which Qur’an came. Second thing he said, it’s a guidance for humanity. Has he even talk about fasting yet? No, not in this ayah and then he says:

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



and clear proofs of guidance and criterion

When you share the message of islam, the message of Qur’an with humanity, aren’t they gona ask for proof? Aren’t the gona ask what’s your basis? Aren’t they gona ask what are your evidences? The very next words, this is a guidance of humanity and a set of proofs from guidance. It’s a set clear arguments from guidance because once you start sharing this message, you will need the proof the criteria of the arguments. And now there is a process, once you share the message then you convince people of the message and if they are convinced of the message, they will know the difference between right and wrong. So that final definition of the Qur’an given is 

and the criteria between right and wrong. It’s so beautifully connected. So now we have the month of ramadhan, the month in which we will refresh our relationship with the Qur’an and then we

gona give it to the people and we gona share it with rest of the humanity. Its gona be reintroduced to us. Now, let me ask you this. Other than the fact that Qur’an was revealed in the month of ramadhan, there are three things Allah mentioned. Let me reiterate for you. (1) Its guidance for humanity. Didn’t muslims already know that. Did muslims of that time already know that? Yes. (2) He said it has proofs from guidance. Did we know that already too? Yes. (3) He said, it makes the distinction between right and wrong. It sets the standards between what is right and what is wrong. Didn’t we know that already too? So in introducing us to Qur’an in ramadhan, Allah told us the very basic introduction to the Qur’an. Isn’t it? You know what that teaches us? Every ramadhan, I am suppose to go back as muslim to the Qur’an as though it is the first time we are reading it. I am being reoriented, reintroduced to this book all over again. That’s what it suppose to be. Imagine somebody who just became musilms. How curious, how enthusiastic, how energetic they are to wana know what this books says, to wana figure it out, to wana understand. That’s the enthusiasm every single musilms suppose to have the moment ramadhan begins. I wana start all over again as though I know nothing. You have to reoritenate again, subhanallah.

Now, He says:

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month

Whoever witness the month, this is very interesting language. Allah could have just said “Fast the entire month” but he said who ever get the witness among you. The language seems to indicate, Allah is saying, not every one of you have the honor and the award of being able to witness this incredible thing called ramadhan. Some of you would not live to see it but if you are among the few lucky that I have gifted the opportunity to that you get to stay alive these 30 days then you better celebrate it as best as you can because that’s an amazing honor and Allah’s way of teaching us to celebrate is

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



Fast

Fasting is our show of joy. I got to witness this month. You re gona fast and by the way if you missed the fast then you can make it up. That’s the rest of the ayah. Now we go back again. Wana go back again before I finish this. Do you know that in every profession they have training program. Police has training, the fire department has training, the military has training or not? Sure. Especially in profession where you are going to headed towards certain danger and you are going to be facing serious challenges, they have the simulations and training ahead of time. Before they throw you out on the battle field, put you out on the street, actually have you go into a burning building etc because these are challenging and threatening situation and training is although more important in those fields. Everybody knows that? Now, in the training itself, some guy says I wana work in the fire department, ok let me take you to our training facility. There is mock building and they paint the flames on it. Are they actually throw him in a burning building, when he is in training? Are they gona do that? Police training, they have this building and you go to upstairs where you see criminal posters shooting at you and you gota shoot back at them. Are they actually gona have actual criminals where they have guys pointing at you? No, not in day 1 of your training. You are gona be given those exercises but there is a level of safety. So you are protected. You will get better and better and then you will be thrown out to the real world. Doesn’t that the case? Ramadhan is actually training and in training you have to ease a challenge a little bit. So you know what Allah says “Our biggest challenge is shaitan”. So in this 30 days of training what does He do, locks of shaitan. Have a good training. I don’t want you to mess up with your training. Have 30 solid days of good training, subhanallah.

But let’s talk about whats this training is? What is it for? I mean the predominant thing, the practical thing we do in ramadhan is fast. But this is not the ayah of fast, this is the ayah of virtues of ramadhan. The ayah of fasting is the ayah before this one. What did those ayat says,

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#183



O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous –

You were given fasting so you can develop consciousness of Allah. You can become aware of God’s presence. You can be conscious in your speech, in your behavior, in your actions, in your financial dealings, in your family dealings. You would recognize that Allah is watching. You would become ever conscious of the presence of Allah. You are as you would be as there is camera on you. As you would be when you are driving and you see the police car, taqwa takes over. You just slow down, your muscles relaxed, you start acting all normal. Sometimes you don’t even realize the there is cop behind you and then lights turned ON and then he passes by you and you say Alhumdulillah. It’s spiritual experience for lots of you. Let me tell you, Allah according to this ayah, Allah says, you will fast so that taqwa develops in you. That’s a very interesting correlation. I wana help you and myself understand that correlation. Fasting is of physically what things? What do you abstain or stay away from when you are fasting? Food and drink off course and obviously intimate relation with the spouse. These are the physical things you stay away from. Allah says you stay away from physical things and you will develop something called Taqwa. Is taqwa something physical? No, Taqwa is something spiritual. So you are going to engage in this physical exercise and you will develop something that is not physical in nature. Something that is taqwa, spiritual. So how do u take something physical and develop something spiritual. That’s the riddle here that I would like to help solve. It’s a hot day at taxas. You are work and fasting. Your coworker non muslim or not that muslim, got one of water bottles and enjoy drinking it in front of you. You are looking right at him, at that very moment does your throat feels something. Your throat feels thrust or no? It does and you go over to your cubical, there is guy and eating chicken and tell us that halal restaurant is awesome. Does your stomach feels something? Yah but there is also an entity inside you, your heart. Your throat start yelling, give me drinking and your heart says ayyyyy throat shut up, not until magrib. There is a battle going on inside you between your body and your heart and who is winning for thirty days. Your heart is winning. You are training your heart to win over body and where does taqwa live? Heart, it needs time to work and win. If shaitan is released then heart wouldn’t get the opportunity to win. It’s not just food and drink guys. I know many of you are party animals but when ramadhan starts even that kind of guy with G35 is at the mosque. Even he takes the step back and says no I am not gona do this man, I can’t’ do it. His heart is winning even other battles. The battles of addition to entertainment, battles of inappropriate interaction, the heart is even winning those battles in ramadhan. Shaitan being gone helps a lot. So the heart is suppose to be getting stronger and stronger and a lot of it so that it can develop this thing called taqwa. So the month of ramadhan is our training program. If life is about guidance and guidance only comes to the people who have taqwa. By the way, when ramadhan is over, you have 11 months of tough battle ahead of you, will the heart be injured in those eleven months? Yes, so it needs to recuperate and strengthen itself again, so you need to come back as you were before start all over again. You don’t finish this training and you are done with you, you gota go back and you gota go back. It’s refresher training for your hearts every year. This is ramadhan. This is what it suppose to be. It’s no joke guys. For you and me knowledge is up here, taqwa is down here. You can gain knowledge but you will not have an ounce of taqwa. Taqwa will come when you will exercise that muscle. When you let that heart win, Subhanallah. So he says now,

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



 Allah intends for you ease

Allah wants ease for you. He says, He wants the ease for me, why did he make the days of fasting more? How can he took the opportunity to give the fidya and get out of the problem, pay my way up, pay the fine and I am done. How can He took that away. Allah ease bigger than the ease you are thinking, not the ease of fasting only. He wants ease for you and your life. You will never have ease in your life if you don’t have guidance and you will never have guidance until you have taqwa. Allah wants your life to be easy and ease will come only from guidance. That’s what He wants for you. That’s why He gave you ramadhan.

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



And does not intend for you hardship

He don’t want difficulty for you. Let me tell you, if you talking to my daughter and I say, you know what I am putting you in summer school. I am gona put you in extra math class. She said, Oo summer, I want to have vocations and I put my hand over her shoulder and I say, I don’t want difficulty for you or first I say, I want you to be happy and I say, I don’t want you to be sad. Isn’t that saying the same thing? I want you to be happy, I don’t want you to be sad. Doesn’t that the same thing? But somehow when a father lovingly say to child, I want you to be happy, I don’t want you to be sad, the second time around just hits you. Yah, dad wouldn’t want me to say that. Allah wants ease for you and He doesn’t want difficulty for you and let me why I gave you this month. Do you get your training certificate? If your training program is of 30 days, Do you get your certificate of 15days and get out? No. What happen to most people that join workout program? They drop out because the “waswasa” is too strong. You know if shaitan is around we start giving up on fasting in like week. We don’t because shaitan is not around. Let me tell you something else. How many parents are here teenagers? You tell your children “Do your home work”, how many times you gota say it? You gota repeat over n over again. Do you know Allah tells to have Taqwa in Qur’an well over 200 times. Why do you think, Allah would talk to us about developing consciousness of Him 200+ times? Because we don’t develop it. If one time would have done it, it would have worked. Now, how many times did He tell us to fast in ramadhan? One ayah in the Qur’an. Huge number of muslims to this day, no matter how irreligious they are, that one instructions is still being maintained. Allah knew in His wisdom, what I have to say one time and it will work and what I need to say 200 times, Subhanallah. But the whole point of ramadhan was to develop the thing that you don’t develop.

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



and [wants] for you to complete the period

I gave you this so you get to complete the period, complete the 30 days. I want you to finish your training. When somebody finishes their training, what are they do? Celebrate, I have finished my training and got certified. When you finish training it’s time to celebrate. Our idea of celebrating is same by saying “Allah O Akbar”. You know where that word come from? Allah told us to do that in Qur’an when you finish your training session of 30 days.

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



and to glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you;

So you can say Takbeer, you can celebrate in the way Allah guided you. So when ramadhan is over, we walk in over to the Eid prayer and what are saying in our way?

ALLAH o AKBAR ALLAH o AKBAR , LA ILAHA ILLALLAH

Its celebration man, you got your certificate. Your heart is just been strengthen. Go out there and destroy shaitan.

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#185



and perhaps you will be grateful

So you can be greatfull. Allah says, you were given fasting so can become God conscious. He says you were given ramadhan so you can be greatful. There is a difference. Purpose of ramadhan to make you grateful but they say like “gratitude exist when you do favor”. You thanks to somebody, when they have done something for you. It would be awkward that you meet a stranger and ask “where are you from, New Jersey” and then say Thank you. You don’t say thank you for no reason. You have to have a reason to say Thank you. Allah said at the end “So you should be grateful”. Question is grateful for what? The general answer would be for everything? What in this particular ayah? What is the first thing Allah said in this ayah “This is the month I gave you Qur’an”. So you should be grateful for the Qur’an. You can’t be grateful for something you haven’t tasted. You can’t be grateful for the qari to have recited the Qur’an. You have to be grateful that you tasted the Qur’an. You experienced the Qur’an in this month. What I beautiful thing, fasting starves our body and revelation feeds our soul. One thing is getting weaker and the other is getting stronger. So the equilibrium is reached again. Be grateful to Allah that He saved your soul this month. He let it connect with the revelation again. Did you know one of the words of the Qur’an in the Qur’an is “Ruh”. One of the descriptions of Qur’an is “Ruh” itself and what is inside of us? Ruh. Angel Gabrael also called “Ruh”. It will feed our soul. It will strengthen us spiritually. Spirituality in islam is directly connected to revelation. The most spiritual people are the ones who cry before Allah. Isn’t that true? The most spiritual people are one who cries. They can’t even help themselves. Tears come down from their eyes. That’s a spiritual experience. What does Allah says “These are the people when they recite revelation, tears come down their eyes”. Even connected crying to Qur’an. Surah Isra, He connected crying to Qur’an. That’s what suppose to happen in ramadhan. This is the training I want to talk to you about. But I told you I wana conclude this conversation today with a reminder of bonus. There is something Allah has given additional bonus in this month that we should really take opportunity of. Some of you may have heard me talk about it.

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#186



And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me

The conversation happening up till now in these ayat were talked about muslim community and in very next ayah, Allah doesn’t talk to us. He is talking to His prophet (saw) and He says whenever my slaves asks you about me. Do you know the difference between “when” and “if”. There is a father whose son goes to the army. Does he say if my son comes back I will be so happy? What does he say? When my son comes back It will be so amazing. He never says “if” because “if” is hopeless. If seems to suggest in my mind, maybe he is dead or he is not making it. But his hope is alive, so in anticipation, in love he says “when”. Allah didn’t say “if my slaves ask you about me”. He said “When my salves will ask you about me” because Allah is waiting in anticipation for you to ask about Him. He didn’t say “if”, He said “When”. When are you gona ask about me? When are you gona ask more about me? And who should you ask? You should ask the right teacher. Who do they go ask, the sahaba? Prophet (saw). Now here is the logical flow of the conversation. I want you to appreciate these sodalities in Qur’an. If they ask you about me then tell them I am near. Allah didn’t says “if my slaves ask you about me, you don’t tell them I am near, you know what I am gona tell them myself that I am near”. All you had to do to get close to Allah was ask about it. Somebody says I feel so distant from Allah man. I feel so distant. Allah says have you asked about me.You know when you miss someone who ask about him. You know that right?? You miss Allah? You wana talk to him? Ask about them? Allah guarantee, don’t be in any doubt I am near . But the ayah said if my slaves ask about me . Somebody might say but I am not a good slave. I am not that good. May be Allah is close to those who are good but I am not one of those guys. How can He be close to me. Allah says  “I responded”. Before I share this with you, you need to understand the comparison. How many of you work for the big corporation? If you work for a big corporation, may be 500 employees, how often you see your CEO? You don’t. If may be you saw your CEO, how long would it be? Couple of second maybe. He walks by your cubical and say a few words like “how is it going” and I was like “I am alright”, I responded. When somebody is very high up and he is responsible for a lot of people then he didn’t respond to everyone of the request. He doesn’t have time for you. You have to make time for him. He won’t make time for you. Now, the lowest employee in your company is who? May be the intern, may be the sectary and CEO would be the highest. The world slave, is there any lower job description in existence? No, Salve means there is no one below you and Allah is the Rab which means there is no one higher than Him. So now you are talking about communication between the highest possible and the lowest possible. Every other situation in the world, this conversation is not possible and if it happens, it might happen by chance and luck and even if it happens it won’t be regular. Allah says, I am near to my slaves. First of all, you would think Master should be distant from slaves but this supremely high says, as low as you are slave I am near you. On the top of that someone above can’t respond to all your requests but Allah says  I immediately respond. What comes first? Request or response. Allah didn’t even mention the request that is  , that’s the request portion of the ayah. We haven’t translated that yet. Allah says I am so anxious to respond, I will mention my response first and I will mention the request later, subhanallah.  is first  is later. It’s incredible. The actually sequence is  “when He calls me I answer”. He says, I answers when he calls. He mentions His enthusiasm. First we learn, He is waiting for us to ask about Him then He says, I will respond immediately. By the way, there are two words for answering. **استجيب** and . **استجيب** means I will try to answer or I will answer over time, also means I want to answer. Just because somebody want to answer, does that mean he actually answer? No, but if you say  it means I immediately answer. People that are important, you have to leave them voice mail and they may be call back you in two years. Allah says, you don’t have to leave me a voice mail. I will respond immediately. I give you another example, I had to take my daughter to specialist and the specialists are very rare. You know every city has 2 or 3 may be. You go to them and they have long waiting list and they give you appointment three months later and its not up to you what day. You just have to take or leave it. So you take it and if you are ten minutes late then what are they gona do? Another four months or five months, Go. I don’t have time for you. When you have to meet someone important, your schedule does not matter, their schedule matters. Isn’t that logical? Doesn’t make sense? Allah says, I respond to the call of the caller , whenever he calls Me. Call me whenever you want. Middle of the day, middle of the night, whenever it is convenient for you, I the most high will make immediate time for you the most low. Doesn’t that something? The power of dua. Allah is inviting you and me to make dua whenever. But there is more, I will share couple of more things with you. He says  , He didn’t say  , he says . Allah says, I am not talking about me in responding to someone who makes dua all the time, he prays to me all the time. Even if there is a guy who has never prayed to me and he decided one time to turn to be sincere. One time he make dua to me. I am talking about that guy,  a single call and then he said , I respond to the call of the caller. Let me tell you this, a caller could be any body. Isn’t it? Does the caller has to be a righteous person to be a caller? No, the Arabic word caller captures anybody. Allah didn’t say you have to this righteous, your beard has to be this long, you must have pray this many prayers, you must finished hujj and you must be purified of all these sins before you get to call me. He says, as long as you are caller and even if you call once, I will respond. How many calls does He get? Can you imagine? Now when you get a lot of calls, is it easy for you and me to forget who was I talking to? By the way who somebody is anonymous, you call them ,A caller. When somebody is known and recognized, you call them, The caller. Allah says, I have respond to the call of The caller, means he is not just anyone to me. He is not “a”, he is a “the”. He is particular to me. He is unique to me. He is individual to me. So you and I have a direct no shared access with Allah in which He recognizes everyone of our presence and every single one of dua because dua could have been all dua but is every single one of them. This is Allah invitation. This is the passage about ramadhan?Right. When this invitation most open? Ramadhan. He is near. Let me conclude with this ayah.

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#186



So let them respond to Me [by obedience]

Then they should try to respond to me. He said, I respond over time or immediately? Immediately. Allah didn’t say, well you should respond immediately to me. He said no, they should at least try to respond to me. They should at least want to respond to me. Allah says, I am not expecting too much from you, at least give me a sincere effort.

Surah Baqarah, Ayah#186



and believe in Me

And they should believe in me. Allah mention believing Him in the end because when pray to Allah and sometimes we don’t see the results of your dua. Sometime you don’t see the results immediately. Then he start thinking like “God said, He will respond immediately where is my raise?”. No, Allah says your prayers are answered not on your schedule. He will respond but he will give whats best for you. You don’t even know whats best for yourself. Allah knows whats better for you. He will respond though in His way and His way is better than yours. That’s requires you to believe Him that His way is better. He way of responding is better. I give you small example. Mother of Mosa is afraid that his baby is gona die. Allah says breast feed the child. Ayah comes breast feed the child. You might think, soldiers are coming to kill as baby make the single noise, and you are telling me to breast feed the child but she trust Allah and start breast feeding child. Guess what? When a child is being fed, does a child makes noise or not? No, so they don’t hear the child. If she tries to hide the child, put a blanket over him and if child makes a little bit of noise then it’s over. Allah gave her the best thing she could have had at very moment, feed your child. And if you really gets scared, here is what you do. Put him in the river. Now the thing is putting him in the river was the best the mother ever did because she believed in Allah. Because you know why? That river got him to a palace and when he got to the palace, Allah had put in the heart of baby that he will only drink that flavor of milk. So no matter how many nurse you bring him, he will not accept. How would a baby know the difference between this milk and that milk? Well Allah installed that software way back when she was at the house, when she fed him the first. So he used to that flavor that’s it. He can’t have anything else. He is not even old enough to recognize his mother but his heart is mature enough to recognize that milk and thats how she gets the job at that house and her baby is safe. Her baby is safe there, safer than anywhere else, inside the palace. Who is gona go door to door inside the palace? Subhanallah. Allah has his way. We think Allah should do it our way. No, Allah way is way better. If Allah ways happen and soldier didn’t catch the baby that day, is it possible they catch him the next day or day after next? Is it possible? What Allah setup for her was terrifying in the beginning but it saved her and her child grief. Allah had bigger plans and that takes trust.



Surah Baqarah, Ayah#186

This is the last part which I like to share with you. Allah said fasting was given so that you can get Taqwa. Ramadhan is given so that you can be grateful. Dua is given so that you can get straight. You can be heading in the right direction. You can be guided. Allah is saying there is direct connection between talking to him asking for things and being guided. That is why the Surah of guidance, the surah of Fatiha, how do we ask for guidance? In a dua. We are learning guidance and dua are one in the same, they are fused together, they are inseparable entities. And you and I, we are not making a lot of dua then I can gurantee you, we don’t have a lot of guidance. Allah says, they should believe in Me, they should ask Me, They should try to respond to Me so that they can be set straight. You don’t make dua, you are gona have problems. Don’t be one of those obnoxious dua people. You know what is obnoxious dua person is? I had a midterm and make so much dua and I still failed that’s why I don’t pray. Dua is not amazon.com. I placed the order and I said expedited shipping and it didn’t show up. So I don’t give them orders anymore. You are not Allah’s customer. You don’t place orders with Allah. You know the people who talk like that where the followers of Mosa who said “Make dua to Allah, give us something”. The followers of firon talk like that. You think you are entitled to get Allah to do what you wana do? Then you sound like the misguided followers of firon or misguided excuse of followers of mosa (as). That’s what you have become. Don’t have an attitude when you make dua to Allah. Understand He is the highest and you are the lowest. May be you forgot that just because He made himself available, you think you lose your place. You can’t have that attitude. A lot of people lose faith because their dua’s are not answered. We have to be the people, the more we make dua, the more our imaan increases. May Allah make the month of ramadhan, the month of Taqwa for us, a month of gratitude for us and month of being set guided for all us.