The background is black with vibrant green decorative elements. On the left, there are stylized leaves and a large, swirling circular pattern. A small butterfly is positioned in the upper right quadrant. The text is centered at the top.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF
*The Holy Month
of Ramadhan*

A Discourse by Hujjatul Islam Sayed Jawwad Naqvi

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In this holy month, we have been fortunate to be given a very good opportunity, one that has been given to us without asking or begging Allah (s.w.t). Many a times, one does not avail a bounty simply because he cannot recognize its significance, cannot appreciate the bounty and therefore is unable to benefit from these momentary, limited windows of opportunity. On the other hand the law of opportunities is also very unique. As mentioned in narrations, opportunities come like clouds and pass away the same way. They do not wait. They do not knock repeatedly on someone's door. They do not come back again. When one is fortunate to get such an opportunity he should be thankful for the bounties given to him in the form of the opportunity. One should welcome it, one should hug it, one should embrace it. In fact on its own, the meanings of Fursat (occasions/time) and Taufeeq (opportunity) also need to be explored.

The Holy Month of Ramadhan is one amongst those great occasions which Allah (s.w.t) has gifted us with.

It is not a minor thing that we have just lived through another year and we have again entered the Holy Month of Ramadhan. Whatever the Holy Qur'an says about this Holy month of Ramadhan is familiar to you; the picture that Qur'an paints of this month is present in your minds:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

The month of Ramadhan is one in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance to mankind, with manifest proofs of guidance and the Distinguisher. (between right and wrong). [2:185]

The Qur'an has declared the Holy Month of Ramdhan as the month in which the Holy Qur'an descended. It is found in the narrations of the family of the Prophet (peace be upon them all) that the Holy Month of Ramdhan is known as 'Rabi-ul-Quloob'. Rabi-ul-Quloob means the month of spring for the hearts. Just as the earth experiences the season of spring, so does the heart. The season of spring isn't simply the passing of days and night. In fact you would have felt that during the season of spring the earth is in a very different state. Hard land, dry land, barren land, deserted land, sandy land, rocky land, waterless land, all these all of a sudden become soft, just by the system of the Creator. Though no one ploughs on this land dead seeds inside the earth come to life. You may have noticed how grass comes out of the earth, then it becomes dry and its seeds get mixed with the earth in its soil. Throughout the year these seeds remain inside the soil, summer comes and passes away, autumn comes and passes away, and then the winter comes. In these three seasons those seeds remain preserved in their dead state inside the soil. But as soon as the season of spring commences, the same dead seed inside this dead land turns green. By the command of the Creator the earth becomes soft again. It develops the capability to accept the seed inside it. It develops the ability to grow that seed. With the command of the Creator it turns green and comes out of the earth, and then on it grows flowers and fruits. What a beautiful sight it is to see! How delicious is the taste of these fruits. How aromatic is the smell of these flowers. Due to the qualities of the season of spring the same dead seeds from the same dead earth now start to blossom and this miracles of creation become visible to the human being.

It is mentioned in the narrations that the Holy Month of Ramadhan is the spring of hearts, the spring of the Holy Qur'an. This does not refer to that heart which is in our chest, or the heart behind the ribs of our chest, but instead that heart which is of our soul, that which is the true, the sensational heart of the human being. This heart, of the soul, passes through different seasons as well – spring, summer, autumn and winter. You have seen the land during winter, when cold air blows, water freezes, and snow falls. Soft things become frozen and hard. Similarly, the human heart also experiences such transitions, such changes. There is a particular human state in which the human heart also becomes frozen. Just like ice, it freezes. In this state the remembrance of Allah (s.w.t) becomes impossible. Sometimes the heart becomes dead like the vegetation in the autumn season — it cannot accept any guidance. In order to freshen up this heart, make it blossom, make it green and lively, this heart of the human being, which is the land of Allah (s.w.t), 'Qalbul Mo'min Arshul Rahmaan' (the heart of a believer is the throne of the Lord) —, Allah (s.w.t) has established a season called the Holy Month of Ramadhan. The heart softens in this month. In this month, the days

that pass have a profound effect. In this month, the state of a person in one day is different to the next. The same sun rises each day, the same days turn into nights, but now, in this holy month, there is a strong and strange feeling. Today, there is a visible readiness, a different preparation. Today, the heart is ready to accept something. It is seeding something.

What does the heart need? Guidance from Allah (s.w.t). His heart's focus is now towards Allah (s.w.t), towards the vicinity of his Lord. His concentration is towards Allah (s.w.t). He is prepared. Hence, Allah (s.w.t), the Merciful, has established the Holy Month of Ramadhan for the Qur'an's descent.

Nuzool (descent or revelation) of the Qur'an is not what we generally think it is. In general, our perception of Nuzool is that which we see, the materialistic and physical Nuzool, like something lying on the roof coming down or the drop of rain when it comes down from the cloud. We say that it has descended, it has come down. It actually refers to the act of when something comes down to a lower location from a higher physical location, just like an elevator in a building. For us, that is descent. The Qur'an has not descended in the form that it was once in some 'higher' location, some bodily form or it was on the seventh heaven and then it came down because heaven is above us and the earth is below. This is not the way the Qur'an descended. In fact, the Qur'an is light, the Qur'an is guidance, and the Qur'an is the word of Allah (s.w.t). It was never before in any physical location, or after, or at present. If there exists a location for the Qur'an it is not a physical one. It is a position or a state and that position is the heart. The heart of a human being is the position of Qur'an.

The meaning of the descent of the Qur'an is that it was in such a state, this guidance of our Lord was in such a position that it was beyond our reach. It was not suitable for our understanding. The Qur'an was in the Lawhe Mahfuz (Protected Tablet). 'Lawhe Mahfuz' is not the name of any frame, the way we see wooden tablets or tablets made from stone. It is not the name of any physical tablet. The Lawhe Mahfuz is a position, a status in this entire universal creation, it is one position. And the Qur'an was in that high position and we are in this position, a very lowly position, to which the Qur'an has referred to as Asfala Safileen:

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

Then We reverted him to the lowest of the low [95:5]

Now, when the Qur'an was in the Protected Tablet it was not suitable to understand for the people sitting in 'Asfala Safileen'. The Qur'an was not suitable to be understood. This does not mean that the Qur'an was complex, or the Qur'an was complicated, or that the Qur'an had some discrepancies. On the other hand the Qur'an has always been a curer for us, it has always been a call for us, it has always been distinct, always clear, always manifested, and a source of enlightenment. But the capacity of those who want to understand it is limited. Their position is very low, their level of understanding is very low. Hence, they are not able to understand the Qur'an. As an example, when an intellectual or professional talk is delivered to a child it is not that it is very complex, difficult or cloudy. What is delivered is that which is very clearly manifested, however the listener being a child is limited in understanding. The speaker would be discussing concepts or realities that are beyond the child's level of understanding.

Sometimes, if the message of the speaker is beyond the reach of his audience, he is asked to come down a little, lower his level of discussion to one that is understandable, comprehensible, digestible.

The meaning of Nuzool is the same: to present something in a form in which it is understandable, at a lower intellectual level. Presenting the same thing in the manner that everyone can understand is referred to as Nuzool. The Qur'an was above our level of understanding. In order to enable its essence to reach us it was dressed in words, whereas previously it was not in the form of words. This is the meaning of Nuzool of the Qur'an: to be available in a form where we can understand it or at least one in which we can possess the capability to understand it. And when does the Qur'an become understandable? The recitation of the Qur'an is not enough to reach an understanding and similarly listening to The Qur'an does not get us there either. The center which Allah (s.w.t) has granted us to understand the Qur'an is our qalb, our heart. But on this qalb, many seasons pass over it, much is harvested over it. It has different states. Sometimes this heart becomes very hard: 'Qalb hijaara aw ashaddo qaswatan', that is, sometimes it is like a stone. In fact, even harder than a stone. Sometimes this heart is 'Bal Alaha Quloobe Atfabloha', meaning that sometimes the hearts become locked, and sometimes on the heart develops dirt and filth.

According to the expression of the Qur'an, Rayn 'ala Quloobehim, layers of dirt have developed on their hearts. Their hearts are sealed by Allah (s.w.t), Hatamaalaho Ala Quloobehim. Some hearts are stones, some are harder than the stone, some



hearts are those which are locked, some are those on which seals have been placed, some are those on which dirt has developed, some hearts are those on which a multitude of layers have developed. Allah (s.w.t) has granted this opportunity, the Holy Month of Ramadhan, to bring their hearts near to the Qur'an, to build an association with it. Allah (s.w.t) has blessed us with this opportunity without us asking Him for it. He realizes our needs. This Holy Month of Ramadhan is the month of spring of the hearts. Those hardened hearts, those harder than stone hearts, those locked and sealed hearts, in this month become tender. This is the spring time and in spring time every land becomes soft. But if this land is left untended, barren, without planting a seed in this land, without being watered, without any care-taking, then it will remain dead as it was. Spring will come and go; the land remains hard and rocky. The need is for us to make this land a farming field, plant seeds, water it, grow something on it. This is a very tough land but on the other hand this season is marvelous, the season of spring. Whatever seed you plant, it will sprout, it will grow out. This is why Allah (s.w.t) has referred to the Holy Month of Ramadhan as the month of Nuzool of the Holy Qur'an.


Fasting is amongst the essential 'Adab' or etiquettes of this month. The grandeur and status of the Month of Ramadhan is not because of fasting. The grandeur of the Month of Ramadhan is due to the Qur'an. Fasting comes under the category of Adab for this holy month. It is the discipline of the Month of Ramadhan to fast in this month. The one who does not fast is an ill-mannered person. But it is not that one who fasts will achieve all the blessings of the Qur'an, or will collect all the blessings of Month of Ramadhan with just one fast! Fasting makes our hearts tender. Fasting prepares our soul for a better understanding of the Qur'an and enables it to properly accept the guidance.

You would have heard the responses of many believers when they are asked as to why they did not participate in Qur'anic lessons, Qur'anic commentary lessons, and why Qur'anic lessons were not organized. Their answer: "Because we were fasting and it left us weak, without stamina, and we couldn't stand up during the fasts". Examine how the objective of fasting is put aside. Allah (s.w.t) has made fasting a prerequisite to understand the Qur'an and we consider fasting as an obstacle in understanding the Qur'an. Why don't you read the Qur'an? Why don't you perform other acts of worship? Why? "Because we are fasting", is the response. Why don't you read religious books? "Because we are fasting", is the response. Is fasting an obstacle or a prerequisite to attain guidance? Allah (s.w.t) has made fasting obligatory to enable

us to understand the Qur'an better and also make others understand better. We think fasting is an obstacle to understanding Qur'an. It is just an excuse.

Hence, this opportunity is a highly bonded opportunity. Its significance is much beyond what imaginations we have in our minds. This opportunity has been granted by Allah (s.w.t) to us, without our seeking it, without our invocations. So let us present these tender hearts, these soft lands in Allah's (s.w.t) presence and say "O Allah (s.w.t), whatever seed you desire, plant it in this land that I am presenting to you. The seed which Allah (s.w.t) will plant is the seed of guidance in the form of the Qur'an. It is essential to read it, understand it. It is necessary to spend day and night with it. It is essential to become associated with the Qur'an. It is essential to become Mahram (legitimate) to the Qur'an. The Na'maharam (illegitimate) cannot understand the Qur'an. Don't become Na'maharam to the Qur'an. Become a Mahram to the Qur'an. This expression of Mahramiyat (legitimacy) is a very fine and precise discussion. We only apply the concept of Maharam and Na'maharam to gender or male-female relationships, but Mahramiyat is much broader than that. When you go for Hajj, when you wear the Ihram you become Mohrim. You enter the Haram of Allah (s), you now become a Mahram there. The Mohrim, the one who wears the Ihram, becomes a Mahram of Allah (s.w.t) and hence, he says "labbaik" (I have come). He has entered inside the four walls, he has entered the Haram, he is a Mohrim now and hence Mahram. He is now a vicegerent of divine spiritual secrets. In the same manner we should become Mahram to the Qur'an. We should not treat the Qur'an as a Na'maharam, and behave as Na'maharam with the Qur'an. Don't live with the Qur'an as a stranger.

Accept the Qur'an. This is the best possible opportunity. You have seen that vegetation that grows in spring, the harvest which comes out, It remains throughout the year. Even during the summer some greenery is still visible, some fruits are still present, and some flowers are still seen. They are not the flowers of summer. They are the same flowers of spring which remain preserved over summer, and they are preserved during autumn and winter as well. Those who sleep during the spring time, for them their spring is also autumn and their spring is also winter. But for those who are awake in the season on spring, all of the other three seasons are brought to life by spring.

This is in our control, if we desire we can make our autumn a spring, but the condition is that we should realize the value of this month. May Allah (s.w.t) give us all the opportunity in this Holy Month of Ramadhan. Considering the value of this occasion; by the will of Allah (s.w.t) we will soak ourselves with the guidance of Qur'an. 

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