

Advantages of the month of Shaban

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In the name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

All thanks be to Allah the Lord of the worlds and peace and prayers be upon His messenger.

The believer in this life as Allah extends his or her life, each day spent in this life ought to be used as an opportunity to increase what will benefit him/her in the next life. Now that the month of Rajab has finished and the month of Shaban has started. The winner is this who started getting ready for the month of Ramadan during the month of Rajab. But, many people have been unaware of the month of Shaban starting. Lets us look at the messenger ppbu and some of the earlier generations. Osama ebn Zaid asked the messenger ppbu: "I have not seen you fast in any other month as much as you fast during the month of Shaban". The messenger ppbu said: **{This is a month during which people tend to forget about. And it is a month when the deeds are elevated to the Lord of the worlds. And I would like my deeds to be brought up while I am fasting}**. Anas ebn Malik said: "The most loved fasting for the messenger ppbu is during Shaban". The messenger's wives noticed that the messenger ppbu apart from the month of Ramadan, never fasted a full month except the month of Shaban. Some reported that the messenger ppbu used to fast the month of Shaban and continue to fast the moth of Ramadan.

Many scholars see that the best voluntary fasting can be done during the month of Shaban rather than any other month. One reason is the closeness of the voluntary fasting to the compulsory fasting of Ramadan

either before it or after it. Just like the regular voluntary (*sunnah*) prayers which occur before and after compulsory prayers. The reward becomes an extension of the reward for the compulsory worship. Also as in prayers, the reward for confirmed *sunnah* prayers which happen before or after the compulsory has higher reward than other ordinary voluntary prayers.

As mentioned earlier when Osama ebn Zaid asked the messenger ppbu: "I have not seen you fast in any other month as much as you fast during the month of Shaban". The messenger ppbu said: **{This is a month during which people tend to forget** (being between the months of Rajab and Ramadan). **And it is a month when the deeds are elevated to the Lord of the worlds. And I would like my deeds to be brought up while I am fasting}**. What the messenger ppbu said here has two important points:

It is a month that people tend to forget about. The reason is that the month of Shaban occurs between two great months being the *Haram* (or sanctified) month of Rajab and the fasting month of Ramadan. Indeed many people think that fasting during the month of Rajab has more reward than fasting during the month of Shaban. And this is not true. It is the other way round.

This also has an indication that many people do not realize that some places or times or even people are more famous, yet the less famous are better in part or in totality. So they get busy with the famous and they miss out on the benefit of what to them is less famous. The messenger ppbu wanted to draw attention to the month which is getting less attention. The messenger ppbu pointed out that Allah likes the deeds done when people's attention is elsewhere. The messenger ppbu said:

{the best prayer after the compulsory prayers is praying in the middle of the night}. This is indicating praying when most people are asleep.

Another point is that rewards received on deeds of obedience during the times when people are busy or forgetful; are great in value and great in variety. The benefits of such deeds are:

- 1) Doing this deed is usually hidden or unseen because people are distracted. Hiding the voluntary deed is better especially fasting. As it is free of hypocrisy. It is secretive between the slave and Allah.
- 2) Such deeds are harder to do. And the best of deeds is the harder ones. The messenger ppbu said: **{the reward is relative to the tiredness}**. It is always easier to do something if everyone else is doing it, and harder to do something if very few are doing it and also because there will be less people to see and follow or to remind others. The messenger ppbu said: **{towards the end of life, time will come when this that does a deed will be rewarded the same as fifty of you (meaning of the companions) because you find who would help you on doing the good deed and they don't}**.

The earlier companions used to call the month of Shaban as "**the month of recitation**". Omro ebn Kaise used to close his shop and free himself for reciting the Koran. Abu-Bakr Al-Bulkhi used to say: "the month of Rajab is the month of sowing and planting. And the month of Shaban is the month of irrigation. And the month of Ramadan is the month of harvesting". How could anyone harvest during Ramadan if one did not plant during Rajab and did not irrigate during Shaban. The month of Rajab has come and gone. What are you going to be doing during this month of Shaban.