In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

**Virtues of Ramadan**

We can’t thank Allah (SWT) enough for the great blessings He (SWT) bestows upon the believers annually. They are the blessings of fasting during the day and reciting His *ayat* throughout the night.

Abdullah Ibn ’Amr (RA) reported that the messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “The fast and the Qur'an are two intercessors for the slave of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The fast will say: ‘O Lord, I prevented him from his food and desires during the day. Let me intercede for him.’ The Qur'an will say, ‘I prevented him from sleeping at night. Let me intercede for him.’ And their intercession will be accepted.” [Ahmad]

Ramadan is special for many reasons. First, the Qur'an was revealed during the month of Ramadan (2:185), and second, there is one night in Ramadan that is better than a thousand months (lailatul Qadr). The believer’s fast is a complete program for the soul. It is a means to regulate the body while nourishing our spirits with Qur’anic recitations. The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan out of faith and seeks Allah’s pleasure and reward will have his previous sins forgiven.” He also said, “He who stands the month of Ramadan (in recitation of the Qur’an) out of faith and seeks Allah’s pleasure and reward will have his previous sins forgiven.”

In order to reap the great rewards and benefits of this great month, make sure your intention is solely for Allah (SWT). As the Prophet (SAW) taught us, deeds are judged according to intentions and everyone gets what he intended for. We fast for His sake and we recite the Qur’an for His good pleasure. One may be successful in losing weight, quitting smoking, breaking bad habits, etc., but if an individual’s sole intention was to do these things, then that person will reap no benefits and endured the hardship of fasting and night prayers in vain. The Prophet (SAW) said, “How many persons fast and get nothing out of their fasting except hunger and thirst and how many persons pray at night and get nothing out of it except staying up late?” Prepare yourself to make a pure and sincere intention and Allah (SWT) will certainly make it easy for you, In sha Allah.

Regarding Ramadan, the Prophet (SAW) informed us that the gates of Hell close while the gates of Paradise open, and the devils will be in chains. He also informed us of the reasoning behind the name of the month. It was named Ramadan because it scorches away the sins.

This is the month to give more in charity. The Prophet (SAW) was described to be very generous, yet the companions found him more generous during the month of Ramadan. This is because of the enormous rewards one receives from his Lord. This is the time to lend a helping hand to the poor and needy, here and abroad. This is the time to feel with our brothers and sisters who have been deprived of the bounties we are enjoying everyday. Think of our brothers and sisters in Gaza, and elsewhere in Palestine, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Somalia, throughout the rest of Africa, and in every corner of the globe. Think of the starvation that is plaguing the world, while we enjoy sipping our hot tea after a gourmet meal. The Prophet (SAW) said, “The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion, and affection are like one body. When one part of the body is afflicted, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever.”

Aisha said, “I asked the Messenger of Allah concerning the ayah, ‘and those who dispense their charity and their hearts tremble with fear.’ Are they the ones who drink alcohol and steal?’” He said, “No, O daughter of as-
Siddeeq. Rather, they are the ones who fast and pray and give in charity, yet fear that it won't be accepted from them. They are the ones who rush to do good deeds, and they are the first to do them.” [al-Tirmidhi]

Ramadan is unique, because the supplications made in it are answered. The Prophet said, “Three people will not have their supplications rejected: a fasting person when he breaks his fast, a just ruler, and an oppressed person.” Therefore, increase your dua’ and let it come out from the depths of your heart. Ask Allah (SWT) to forgive you. Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Aas (RA) related what Muhammad (SAW) once said. A fasting person, upon breaking his fast, has a supplication that will not be rejected. When Abdullah broke his fast he would say, “O Allah, I ask of You by Your mercy that encompasses everything, to forgive me.” Ramadan is about forgiveness. Aisha, the youngest of the Prophet’s wives (RA), would ask the messenger of Allah (SAW) what to supplicate on the night of power (Qadr), the night described by Allah (SWT) as being better than a thousand months. The Prophet (SAW) taught her to say, “O Allah, You are the one who forgives, and loves to pardon, so forgive me.” Ramadan is an expiation (kaffarah) of the sins committed from the previous Ramadan, save the major sins, unless one repents.

As described by Muhammad (SAW), Lailatul Qadr appears on a very quiet, tranquil, pleasant, clear, and illuminated night, neither hot nor cold, neither windy nor rainy. The sun rises in the morning without rays, looking like a huge bright full moon. It is believed that Allah (SWT) will answer the supplications of a believer during that night. It is best to supplicate for forgiveness and good health as the Prophet (SAW) has recommended. One may, however, ask for anything.

The Prophet (SAW) used to do ‘Itikaf (retreat) at the masjid in the last 10 days of Ramadan, devoting all his time to worshipping Allah (SWT) until he died. To reap the maximum benefits of Ramadan, it is highly recommended to devote the last days and nights of Ramadan in constant worship of Allah (SWT). One may engage in extra prayers (salah nafilah), reciting the Qur’an, doing zikr, supplications, and other forms of worship that may bring one closer to Allah (SWT). May Allah (SWT) accept our fasts, prayers, and every good deed we perform during this great and blessed month, ameen.

Last, but not least, we are told by Allah (SWT) the purpose of fasting. “O you who believe, fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may attain taqwa.” (2:183)

Righteousness, piety, Godliness, God-consciousness, and God-fearing are all adjectives that describe the term taqwa. This is ultimately what makes the month of Ramadan so unique. The fasting person’s awareness of God increases. He gets closer to his Lord through the zikr of the night. Ramadan is all about taqwa. And in the end, it is only those who have attained taqwa who will be admitted to Paradise, simply because God has prepared it only for righteous and God-fearing people.

We wish you a very happy and blessed Ramadan.

Mustapha Elturk