

Arab Republic of Egypt

Ministry of Awqaf

Sha'ban ٢٧, ١٤٤٠ A.H./May ٣, ٢٠١٩ C.E.

Ramadan: A Month of Worship and Action

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, Who says in His Glorious Book, “O believers! Fasting is prescribed for you—as it was for those before you—so perhaps you will become mindful ‘of Allah’.” I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that our Master Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, who says, “He who observes fasting during the month of Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward from Allah, will have his past sins forgiven.” May Allah’s Peace and Blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad, his Household, Companions and upon those who follow him till the Day of Judgment.

One of the bounties of Allah for His servants is that He has appointed seasons for goodness in which blessings are granted, mercy comes down from Allah and the reward is multiplied. The Prophet (PBUH) said, “Verily your Lord has breaths of His Mercy in the days of your time—so expose your selves to them. Perhaps one of you may get such breath of mercy after which he may not suffer any misery!” Among the most virtuous seasons of goodness and the most rewarding is the Month of Ramadan. It is the master and the greatest of all months; its days are the best days and its nights are the finest and purest ones of the whole year. The Prophet (PBUH) used to express happiness for the coming of Ramadan and convey glad tidings to his Companions. Abu Hurayrah narrated, “There has come to you Ramadan, a blessed month, which Allah has enjoined you to fast. In it the gates of heavens are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and

every devil is chained up. In it there is a night which is better than a thousand months; whoever is deprived of its goodness is indeed deprived."

The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) used to ask Allah to give them life till Ramadan and to help them perfect their deeds. Ibn Rajab narrated that many of the righteous people used to ask Allah over six months that they witness Ramadan, and ask Allah over another six month to accept their deeds in that month. Yahya Ibn Kathir said, "They used to pray: O Allah! let us live till the coming of Ramadan and Keep Ramadan for us and accept (our good deeds in) it." Jabir Ibn Abd Allah narrated that, "Once the Prophet (PBUH) mounted the pulpit. Upon the first step he said 'amen!' Upon the second step he said 'Amen!' Upon the third step he said 'Amen!' people said, 'we heard you saying 'amen' three times?' the Prophet answered, "Gabriel came to me and said, 'May a man who witness Ramadan till its end without being forgiven, be humiliated, so I said: Amen."

As we prepare to receive this honorable guest in the next few days, we need to follow the footsteps of the Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions in that month. We need to follow their example of worship and good deeds. Every Muslim needs to revive his intention as intention is the secret of accepting one's deeds. The Prophet said, "Actions are (judged) by intentions (*niyyah*), so each man will have what he intended. Thus, he whose migration was to Allah and His Messenger, his migration is to Allah and His Messenger; but he whose migration was for some worldly things he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he migrated." Abu Hurayrah narrated also that the Prophet (PBUH) said that Allah said, 'Every act of the son of Adam is for him except fasting. It is done for My sake, and I will give a reward for it.' By Allah in Whose Hand is the life of Muhammad, the breath of the observer of fast is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk."

A Muslim has to increase his good deeds and adhere to the guidance of the Prophet (PBUH) in the month of Ramadan. This includes the immediate *Iftar* after the Maghrib and the late *Subur* (pre-Dawn meal) as the Prophet said, “My Ummah will remain well as long as they consume *Iftar* early and delay the *Subur*.” And He (PBUH) said, “Take *Subur* as there is a blessing in it.”

A Muslim has to avoid eating and drinking much as the Almighty Allah says, “Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely He does not like the wasteful.” The Prophet also said, “A human being fills no worse vessel than his stomach. It is sufficient for a human being to eat a few mouthfuls to keep his spine straight. If he has to, then he should keep one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for his breathing.”

What a beautiful trait that the rich show sympathy for the poor in this month. It is the month of generosity and charity giving; it is the month that embodies meanings of mercy and kindness for orphans, widows, and the poor in all forms of solidarity. This would be a kind of bringing happiness to those people. Ibn Abbas narrated that , “The Prophet (PBUH) was the most generous of all the people, and he used to become more generous in Ramadan when Gabriel visited him every night and recited the Qur'an to him. During this period, the generosity of Messenger of Allah was faster than the rain-bearing wind.” This is not confined to giving money. It includes also kindness, love, communication, and fulfilling rights and responsibilities.

A Muslim must increase his ritual deeds such as reciting the Qur'an and pondering over its meanings, and observing the night prayers as the Prophet (PBUH) said, “He who observes fasting during the month of Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward from Allah, will have his

past sins forgiven." And said, "Whoever spends the night of *Lailat Al-Qadr* in prayer out of faith and in the hope of reward, will have his past sins forgiven."

'Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) narrated "Once in the middle of the night Allah's Messenger (PBUH) went out and prayed in the mosque and some men prayed with him. The next morning the people spoke about it and so more people gathered and prayed with him (in the second night). They circulated the news in the morning, and so, on the third night the number of people increased greatly. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) came out and they prayed behind him. On the fourth night the mosque was overwhelmed by the people till it could not accommodate them. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) came out only for the Fajr prayer and when he finished the prayer, he faced the people and recited "*Tashah-hud*" (I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger), and then said, "Verily your presence (in the mosque at night) was not hidden from me, but I was afraid that this prayer (Prayer of *Tahajjud*) might be made compulsory and you might not be able to carry it out." Then, 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (Allah be pleased with him) believed that it was better to gather people behind one particular Imam. In this regard, 'Abd Al-Rahman Ibn 'Abd Al-Qari said: "I went out in the company of 'Umar bin Al-Khattab one night in Ramadan to the mosque and found the people praying in different groups; a man praying alone or a man praying with a little group behind him. So, 'Umar said, 'In my opinion, it would be better to collect these (people) under the leadership of one reciter (i.e. let them pray in congregation!)'. So, he made up his mind to congregate them behind Ubai Bin Ka'ab. Then on another night I went again in his company and the people were praying behind their reciter. On that, 'Umar remarked, 'What an excellent *Bid'a* (i.e. innovation in religion) this is!

But the prayer which they do not perform, but sleep at its time is better than the one they are offering.¹ He meant the prayer in the last part of the night. (In those days) people used to pray in the early part of the night." This actually shows 'Umar's keenness on performing the recommended night prayer and establishing the unity of Muslims.

Yet, true fasting means abstaining from all kinds of disobedience and sins, taking into account that there are many who fast yet get nothing but hunger and thirst. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "There are people who fast and get nothing from their fast except hunger, and there are those who pray and get nothing from their prayer but a sleepless night." He (PBUH) also said: "Whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions and does not abandon foolishness, Allah is not in need of his leaving food and drink." Jaber Ibn A'bd Allah (Allah be pleased with him) said: "When you fast, your ears, eyes and tongue should abstain from telling lie and all what is prohibited. Also, you should abstain from hurting your servant. Furthermore, you should be crowned with serenity and dignity. Do not let your ordinary day be the same like your day of fasting." Muslims should be keen on offering true fasting to Allah, so that s/he would get the desired result from fasting, which is *Taqwa of Allah* (fearing Allah).

We should also take into account that the blessed month of Ramadan is a month of hard and diligent work, so one should not turn lazy during Ramadan on grounds of tiredness and fatigue. In actuality, many people incline to laziness and indolence, and even sleep most of the daytime in Ramadan, which is against people's interests. In truth, all of this totally contradicts the ultimate objective of fasting, which is *Taqwa* about which Allah, Glorified is He, says: "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous." *Taqwa* is not achieved by laziness and

indolence, but rather by exerting more efforts in worship, hard work, sincerity and watching Allah, Most High.

Watching Allah, Most High, is one of the most distinctive features of the fasting person, which requires fulfilling the due rights of work. That is because the One Who watches your prayer, fasting and abstaining from eating and drinking is the One Who watches your sincerity in fulfilling the due rights of your work.

Muslim brothers,

Lawful provision and answering invocations shall top the list of the fasting person's priorities. Thus, s/he should be fully aware of the fact that in case he receives money for a work s/he does not perform, this means that s/he has consumed unlawful provision. That is because s/he be receiving that money for not performed work, or that s/he had breached the terms and conditions of the work contract, be it governmental or private.

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This is my speech to you, and I ask Allah to forgive me and you.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; I bear witness that there is no god deserved to be worshipped but Allah, the Almighty, and that our master Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger; may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him, his family, Companions and those who follow his footsteps and guidance to the Day of Judgment.

Muslim brothers,

Work and worship are two counterparts; worship is work, and the work sincerely dedicated for the Sake of Allah is worship; they are inseparable from each other. Allah, Most High, says: "And say, "Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so, will] His Messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do." Careful investigation of the Biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the biographies of the companions and the Islamic History arrives at a conclusion that the month of Ramadan is a month of work and production. Not only that, but most of the Muslim victories took place during that month. It is truly the month of Muslim victories and openings; it is in this month that the Great Battle of Badr occurred- this battle that served as a criterion between truth and falsehood, as Allah, the Almighty, granted succor to the believers who were few in number. Allah says: "When two parties among you were about to lose courage, but Allah was their ally; and upon Allah the believers should rely. (١٢٢) And already had Allah given you victory at [the battle of] Badr while you were few in number. Then fear Allah; perhaps you will be grateful. (١٢٣) [Remember] when you said to the believers, "Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down? (١٢٤) Yes, if you remain patient and conscious of Allah and the enemy come upon you [attacking] in rage, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels having marks [of distinction] (١٢٥) And Allah made it not except as [a sign of] good tidings for you and to reassure your hearts thereby. And victory is not except from Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise."

The Opening of Mecca took place in the month of Ramadan- it was a great victory whereby Allah honored Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the believers with him, and humiliated polytheism and polytheists. In the modern era,

Ramadan witnessed the victory of the October 7th/ Ramadan 1st with which Allah enabled Egypt to regain its lands and dignity. During that war, the Egyptian soldiers raised the slogan “Allah is Great”; they were fasting, reciting the Quran and making sincere invocations to Allah, which is why Allah granted them victory, and enabled them to expel the aggressors in defense of the religion, land and honor; it was a practical lesson for anyone who thinks to commit aggression against Egypt.

Actually, we are in a dire need to regain the spirit of Ramadan in all the fields of our life to achieve victory, reinforce the pillars of truth and justice, and protect the land, honor and dignity, so that our Ummah would regain its due status among nations and countries, a matter that won't be achieved save with maintaining unity, working towards achieving one particular goal, and doing good for all mankind.

O Allah, bless the month of Sha'ban for us, make us live the days of Ramadan and accept our worship in it