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# WISDOM

A Source of Inspirational and Traditional Islamic Knowledge

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# RAMADAN:

## A Great Opportunity to Achieve Taqwa



Osman Nuri Efendi:  
The Holy Month Ramadan

Dr. Kerim Buladi:  
Constancy in Worship in the  
Wake of Ramadan

Rayyan Alzimati.  
Spiritual Benefits of Ramadan





# EDITORIAL

*D*ear Readers,

**“O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that attain *Taghwa*”** (Surah Baqarah 2:183)

**Prophet (upon him peace) says: The beginning of Ramadan is mercy, its middle salvation and its end safety from Hell.** (Ibn-i Huzeyme, Sahih, III, p.191)

Allah Almighty, the All-Compassionate and All-Pardoning, is Merciful towards His servants. This is why Allah has left open the door of repentance and has conferred upon them various blessed nights, days and months. The month of Ramadan is one of these. Ramadan is a great opportunity for all the believers to attain Allah’s pleasure.

Abu Ja’far said that when the month of Ramadan was about to approach, that is, on the twenty-seventh of Sha’ban, the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) told Bilal to call upon people to assemble. People assembled, so the prophet (upon him peace) ascended the pulpit, praised the Almighty then said,

“O people! The month (of Ramadan) has approached, and it is the master of all months wherein one night is better than a thousand months. During Ramadan, the gates of hell are closed and those of Paradise are kept open. Whoever lives through it and is not forgiven will be distanced from the mercy of Allah, and whoever during it does not receive Allah’s forgiveness while his parents are living will surely be further away from receiving Allah’s mercy. And whoever hears my name and fails to send blessings unto me will (likewise) be distanced from Allah’s mercy.”

Our teacher, Osman Nuri Efendi, writes on the merits of doing charitable acts in Ramadan because these charitable acts will cause Allah’s forgiveness to burst endlessly. Rayyan Alzimati writes about the spiritual benefits of Ramadan, while Dr. Selim Arik explains us in his article that why glad tidings have been given exclusively to those who sincerely repent and fast during the month of Ramadan and those who perform ‘Umra during this month will be purified of sin.

May Allah accept our fasting, our *du’as* and all our good deeds in Ramadan, and make us be among those believers who enter Paradise as the *hadith* says:

“Paradise has eight gates, and one of them is called Ar-Rayyan through which none will enter but those who observe fasting.” Âmîn!

*Elif Kapici*

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# Wisdom

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**Professor  
Ismail Lutfi  
Cakan**

The 'Supreme  
Triumph' in  
the Qur'an by  
means of the...

**Dr. M. Selim  
Arik**

'Umra During  
the Month of  
Ramadan and  
Its Excellence



**Salih Kareem**

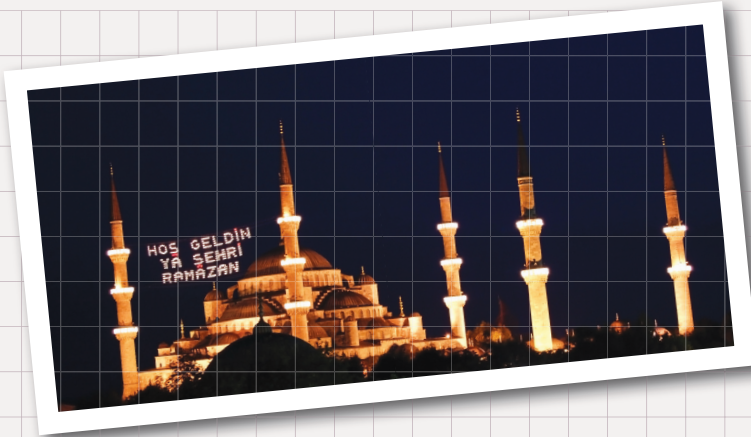
The Society of  
the Age of Bliss  
(III)

**Halime  
Demiresik**

Sayyidah  
Mariya (r.ah)  
(I)



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# *The Holy Month Ramadan*



**We must give charity generously to the poor. The Prophet (upon him peace) informed us that the best charity is the one which is given in the month of Ramadan.**

**A**ll acts of worship should be performed with only one aim in mind: to attain Allah's pleasure. To do this one needs to train and educate the heart, to clean it from such base thoughts. We also cannot attain Allah's pleasure through these sort of egoistic goals.

In order to benefit fully from the holy month of Ramadan, the following advice of the Prophet (upon him peace) should be followed:

- 1-To repeat the Shahadah
- 2-To ask forgiveness from Allah.
- 3-To perform all possible good deeds in order to attain Paradise
- 4-To refrain from what has been forbidden (harâm) so as to save ourselves from the flames of hell.
- 5-To give charity generously and to make those whose hearts are broken happy.
- 6-To give iftârî (food upon opening of the fast) to the believers.

Of course, there is no limit to what one can do as a good deed. Everybody should do his best in order to compete in doing any good that is for the good of the Muslim community. Ramadan is the season for perfecting the believers morally. As we are careful not to use our mouths for eating during Ramadan, we must similarly be careful not to use them for backbiting and useless talk. Otherwise, we miss the real target of fasting, which is to perfect the manners of the believer in accordance with Islamic morality.

Concerning this, the Prophet (upon him peace) said: "Fasting is a (protecting) shield as long as the fasting person does not harm his fast."

The companions asked the Prophet (upon him peace) how the fast is damaged. The Prophet answered: "By lying and backbiting." (Nasâi, Mu'jam al-awsât)

The backbiters refrain from eating during the daytime but because of their backbiting they eat human flesh. Hence their physical fast is broken. For such people Sufian Sawri says: "Backbiting breaks the fast."

In another similar hadith the Prophet (upon him peace) said, "Whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink (i.e. Allah will not accept his fasting.)" (Bukhârî, Vol. 3, Book 31, Number 127)

These hadiths clearly show us that it is

very important to control our behavior in Ramadan. We must prepare our heart and mind for fasting. It should not be done heedlessly and carelessly. We must perform our salâts with extra care and attentiveness, strengthen our soul by the remembrance of Allah, recite the Qur'ân with an attentive heart and mind, clean our wealth and our consciousness by giving charity and zakât. We should not forget that the Holy Qur'ân was revealed in the month of Ramadan and we must show extra care in order to apply the injunctions of the Qur'ân in our lives.

The real recitation of the Qur'ân is performed by the heart. The external eyes function as glasses for the eye of the heart. There is a close connection between Ramadan and the Qur'ân. Ramadan is the time to listen to the voice of the Qur'ân; the voice which reminds us of our real destination, which we will arrive at after death. The Prophet (upon him peace) said: Fasting and the Qur'ân will be intercessors on the Day Judgment." (Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, II, 174) "Fasting is half of patience." (Tirmidhî)

The reward of fasting will be determined in the Hereafter on the Day of Judgment: In a hadith al-Qudsi, as narrated by Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "Allah said, 'All the deeds of Adam's sons (people) are for them, except fasting which is for Me, and I will give the reward for it.' Fasting is a shield or protection from the fire and from committing sins. If



**The good servants of Allah who fulfill these kinds of acts, will be covered with Divine Mercy and Blessings. Allah opens the doors of mercy and closes the doors of hell.**

one of you is fasting, he should avoid sexual relations with his wife and quarrelling, and if somebody should fight or quarrel with him, he should say, 'I am fasting. By Him in Whose Hands my soul is 'The unpleasant smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the sight of Allah than the smell of musk'. There are two pleasures for the fasting person, one at the time of breaking his fast, and the other at the time when he will meet his Lord; then he will be pleased because of his fasting.' (Bukhârî, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 128)

The Qur'ân in the following verse enumerates the classes of those who will receive forgiveness and a mighty reward, mentioning those who fast: "Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the steadfast men and the steadfast women and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember- Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward." (Ahzab, 33:35)

Fasting is such a form of worship where through it one can learn how to value the

favors of Allah, the Almighty. The fasting man gets a chance to understand the difficulties of poverty and hunger. Through fasting the believer saves himself from slavery to the material and attains the highest quality of self-control.

In addition to fasting, offering the tarawih salât in congregation after the late-night prayer of 'Isha, is also a sunnah in the month of Ramadan. In many places throughout the world the entire Qur'ân is recited during this month and in this prayer. However, these salâts should be performed with devotion, slowly and not in a quick manner.

Unfortunately, in some mosques people pray tarawih salât as if they are racing with each other. The Prophet (upon him peace) informs us that he made the tarawih prayers his sunnah so as to be followed by the Muslim community. He further stated that if a believer fasts in the month of Ramadan expecting reward only from Allah, and performs the tarawih salât, he becomes as sinless as on the day he was born from his mother. (Ahmad B. Hanbal; Nasâi)

Another important point in Ramadan is to have the meal at suhur. Suhur is taken before dawn begins, when the time of fasting starts. Normally people have their iftar (fast breaking meal) on time but most people neglect having suhur since it is taken very early. We must be strong-minded about having something, even if it is a glass of water.

**Ramadan is the season for perfecting the believers morally. As we are careful not to use our mouths for eating during Ramadan, we must similarly be careful not to use them for backbiting and useless talk.**







**Fasting is such a form of worship where through it one can learn how to value the favors of Allah, the Almighty. The fasting man gets a chance to understand the difficulties of poverty and hunger.**

Concerning this subject as narrated by Anas bin Malik, the Prophet (upon him peace) says: "Take Suhur as there is a blessing in it." (Bukhârî, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 146)

As narrated by Sahl bin Sad: Allah's Apostle said, "The people will remain on the right path as long as they hasten the breaking of the fast." (Bukhârî, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 12)

In order to realize the reality of the Holy Month of Ramadan one needs to open his heart to the rain of forgiveness and Divine Blessings. The rocks and the seas do not benefit from these rains, only fertile lands benefit from it. In other words, through awareness of Allah's presence and giving thanks to Him for his favors we should benefit from this month. The Prophet (upon him peace) informs us the following good news: "When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained." (Bukhârî, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 123)

This means that those who fast in the real sense of fasting do not commit sins. As research conducted in Islamic countries, the crime rate falls to its lowest rate in the month of Ramadan. The evil of Satan is limited, however, the evil of the ego continues, hence Muslims should be vigilant against their base desires.

Fasting is described as physically refraining

from food, drink and sexual intercourse but it also requires the protection of the soul from all animal-like desires and inclinations. The Sufis emphasize the spiritual dimension of fasting and consider it an essential part of fasting. As one refrains from eating and drinking similarly he should refrain from vices such as backbiting, lying, and other base desires. The Prophet warns us in this regard and says:

"Whoever does not give up false speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his abstaining from food and drink (i.e. Allah will not accept his fasting.)" (Bukhârî, Kitâbu's-sawm, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 127; Tirmîdî, Bâvu's-sawm, Abû Dawud, sawm, 236, Ibn Maja, 122)

As required in this hadith we should refrain from all sorts of vices that will damage our fasting. In particular, the vice of anger and hostile behavior should be eliminated.

Allah's Apostle (upon him peace) said, "Fasting is a shield. The person observing fasting should avoid sexual relations with his wife and should not behave foolishly and impudently, and if somebody fights with him or abuses him, he should tell him twice, 'I am fasting.'" The Prophet added, "By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, the smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the sight of Allah than the smell of musk. (Allah says about the fasting person),



**In order to realize the reality  
of the Holy Month of Ramadan  
one needs to open his heart  
to the rain of forgiveness and  
Divine Blessings.**

‘He has left his food, drink and desires for My sake. The fast is for Me. So I will reward (the fasting person) for it and the reward of good deeds is multiplied ten times.’ (Bukhârî, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 118)

Another name for the month of Ramadan is the month of patience and forbearance. Some commentators of the Qur’ân explain the Arabic of fasting *sawm* with the words *sabr* meaning patience implying the similarity of these two words. With this respect, *sawm* is to be resilient against the base desires, and to be patient against the difficulties.

In Islam, patience occupies the central place among other good characteristics. Patience is half of faith and the key to salvation. Through it one attains paradise. Patience is to be resilient against unpleasant events without damaging our balance and to submit to the will of Allah. The prophets as well as the friends of Allah reached high states and the help of Allah through patience. Having to show patience in this world gives us a bitter taste but it will give sweet fruits in the Hereafter.

In order to lessen the bitterness of patience we should contemplate the favors of Allah that are bestowed on us. We should think that there is wisdom behind the calamities and if patience is shown there will be great rewards in return. The most important

principle in the concept of patience is that a Muslim should show it at the first strike of the calamity. When the pain of the disaster has lessened then patience will not be rewarded as such. The Divine name “As-Sabûr” is most beautifully reflected in the prophets and friends of Allah. As the most important legacy given to us, patience is the most important characteristic both in times of happiness as well as of calamities, in times of poverty as well as wealth.

In order to fast in the consciousness that Allah is with us we should carefully fulfill the components of fasting such as *suhur*, *tarâwih*, reciting the Qur’ân, engaging in humble and earnest supplication and in the remembrance of the name (attributes) of Allah.” The time of breaking the fast is a good time when Allah accepts the prayers and answers the supplications; it is the time of unity with Allah. To spend this time with others and to share the blessings is important since this is the source of mercy and spiritual contentment. Therefore the Prophet (upon him peace) advises us to share our food with the Muslims at *iftar*

“Whoever gives an *iftârî* (meal to break the fast) to a fasting person, he will be rewarded the same amount with the fasting person and the reward of the fasting person will not be lessened (due to extra reward given to the host). (Tirmidhi, *Sawm*, 90)

Abû Saïd narrated the following incident: "One day I had prepared food for the Prophet and his companions. When I served the food one of the companions said: I am fasting. Upon this the Prophet (upon him peace) stated: Your brother has invited you and made preparations for you and now you are saying that you are fasting. Break your fast now and make up for it on another day." (Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud)

"On another occasion the Prophet (upon him peace) and some of his companions ate food while Bilâl was fasting. The Prophet (upon him peace) commented upon the situation of Bilal and said: We are eating our sustenance, Bilal's sustenance is in paradise." (Ibn Majah)

These traditions give us the choice of completing a voluntary fast or breaking it, as the conditions require.

Allah will judge all our actions and life. The best of times are the ones that we spend with Him for His sake. When we enter the grave all our transient reminiscences, and memories will be buried as well. However only the good actions we have performed for the sake of Allah will benefit us. The Prophet states that when a believer dies, his ritual prayers (salât) will rest above his head, his charity on the right and his fasting on the left. (Fadâil al-Amâl)

A lifetime spent that was not for the sake


of Allah is a deception, like the vision in the desert heat. It has no reality but is only an illusion of the mind.

By the mercy of Allah, we follow the advice of the Prophet (upon him peace) and appreciate the great chance that the Holy months of many Ramadans offer to us so that way we can perform good actions and as we struggle to decrease our mistakes.

The Prophet says: If people really knew the nature and blessings of Ramadan they would wish that Ramadan would continue all year. (Ibn Huzeyma, Sahih, III, 190)

The Holy Ramadan is a climate of forgiveness; in this month all the pillars of Islam can be performed except pilgrimage. However, Ramadan prepares the believers spiritually for the duty of pilgrimage by refining their morality. In pilgrimage, Muslims are trained to be nice and not aggressive, disobedient slaves.

The month of Ramadan is like the season of spring where the trees bloom and the greenery is everywhere. Similarly the dry trees of faith find life in Ramadan through the water of good actions. However, those who do not know the value of Ramadan are in great loss as stated in the following hadith: "One day the Prophet (upon him peace) asked us to sit closely around the minbar (the pulpit from where he gave his Friday sermon). Hence, we all gathered around. The



The Sufis emphasize the spiritual dimension of fasting and consider it an essential part of fasting.



**Some commentators of the Qur'ân explain the Arabic of fasting *sawm* with the words *sabr* meaning patience implying the similarity of these two words.**



Prophet (upon him peace) started to climb the stairs. On the first step he said: 'Amin', on the second step he again repeated the same phrase: 'Amin'. On the third step he again said: 'Amin'.

When he got down from the minbar we asked him: "O Prophet we heard something that we have never heard from you before. Why did you say Amin three times?"

The Prophet (upon him peace) said:

- When I was climbing the first step, Gabriel came to me and said: the curse of Allah be on those who did not use the chance of Ramadan to attain Divine forgiveness. And I said: 'Amin'.

When I was on the second step Gabriel prayed: "Let the curse be on those who did not say 'peace be on you' when your name was mentioned." And I said: "Amin!" In the third step Gabriel again said: "Let the curse (of Allah) be on those who did not attain paradise although they survived to the old age of their parents or only one of them (i.e. those who did not serve either of their parents or both of them in their old age and attain the big reward as a consequence)." I again said: "Amin!" (Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 170)

This hadith clearly indicates the miserable end of three groups of people. The first group are those who did not worship Allah in the month of forgiveness- Ramadan. The second

group are those who did not say peace be on him when his name was mentioned. And the last group are those who did not look after their parents in their old age. We should be very careful in these three important things if we want to enter Paradise.

In addition to fasting, the days of Ramadan should be valued and adorned with other good acts, in particular helping the disadvantaged. The orphans, the widows, the helpless, the sick, the poor and other needy groups should be supported financially and they should not be left alone to face their problems. They should be given a friendly hug, in that way the value of Ramadan will be realized. These kinds of charitable acts will cause Allah's forgiveness to burst endlessly. The good servants of Allah who fulfill these kinds of acts, will be covered with Divine Mercy and Blessings. Allah opens the doors of mercy and closes the doors of hell. The Prophet (upon him peace) states: "Charity prevents seventy kinds of calamities." (Suyûti, al-Jâmiu's-Saghîr, v.II, p.52)

In short, the charity given in the month of Ramadan is rewarded excessively and the Prophet (upon him peace) states the exclusiveness of the month in the following words: "O Messenger of Allah! Which charity is best in terms of reward." The Prophet (upon him peace) answered: The charity given in the month of Ramadan. (Tirmidhi)

The life of the Prophet (upon him peace) sets the highest example of giving charity, and the great scholar Ibn Qayyim describes the generosity of the Prophet in the following way: The Prophet was not like anyone in giving charity. He never gathered worldly possessions in his house. If someone asked from him something he would not reply without giving neither too little nor too much. When he gave he would give without the fear of becoming poor. For him giving charity was the highest pleasure. His pleasure was much more than the one who received the donation for an urgent need.

We should do our best to use this opportunity given to us in the current year. We never know if we shall be privileged again to reach the holy month next year. Apart from fasting and performing our prayers in the mosque we should recite the Holy Word of Allah. We must give charity generously to the poor. The Prophet (upon him peace) informed us that the best charity is the one which is given in the month of Ramadan. By combining all these good deeds we must turn to Allah in humbleness and sincerity. May Allah help us to perform fasting in the best way.

In the holy month of Ramadan there is one particular night called Laylat-ul- Qadr (Night of Power) that should be spent in the

worship of Allah. It is a special time when Allah spreads his mercy over the community of Muhammad (upon him peace). On this night, Allah bestows his spiritual treasures on Muslims. For its great value, Allah, the Almighty, revealed a chapter named the Chapter of Power. It is a remembrance left by Allah from the time of the Prophet (upon him peace) for those who aspire to spiritual realities and for those who would like to attain mercy and forgiveness.

We can attain the reality of this when the believer purifies his soul from vices such as hypocrisy, ostentation, haughtiness, and spends this time with such acts as fasting, prayer, and giving charity. If we finish our spiritual training in the school of Ramadan successfully then we will be qualified for a degree to celebrate the Eid-ul-Fitr, the prayer and holiday at the end of the month.

The days of Ramadan are days of forgiveness and being freed from hell, and due to this when the holy month passes, good believers shed tears out of sorrow. However, Allah, the Almighty, rewards us with the celebratory Eid as reward for our patience, fasting and other charitable acts.

May Allah, the Almighty, make our lifetime one whole Ramadan and our morning in the Hereafter an Eid and feasting.





The 'Supreme Triumph' in the Qur'an

# by means of the Night of *Deliverance*

**The journey of deliverance that begins with obedience to Allah and His Messenger, is maintained without defiance, and which entails fear and reverence of Allah, truthful speech, and taking on the cause of struggle for the sake of one's beliefs, will end with entry into Paradise.**

For human beings who are being tried in the arena of servanthood that is this world, their greatest desire and expectation, even if they do not expressly state it to be so, is to be able to attain happiness in **two worlds** (*saadat al-darayn*).

As the natural outcome of their great desire and aspirations, being unable to reach the desired goals and meet the desired expectations is the subject of their **greatest fear and apprehension**.

It goes without saying that these two truths are valid for those who possess a belief in the Hereafter and an anxiety about being brought to account. Such a concern and expectation concerning the Hereafter is not in question for those who say, "**My home consists of this world**," – if this is indeed what they truly believe. They are left all alone with the inevitable price of their denial.

The matter, therefore, is one pertaining to the believers who possess an awareness of being in an examination of servanthood in this world – that is, for the servants of Allah.



Although success in the world of deeds and action is equal to salvation in the Realm of Reckoning, the levels, varieties, outline and ultimate dimension of the latter is still a great subject of interest. An informed Muslim, for instance, who was to say, **“I possess no such curiosity,”** is not likely to exist.

With the approach of the blessed months of Rajab, Shaban and Ramadan, we sought by means of this article, to call to mind collectively the verses in the Qur’an pertaining to the supreme triumph and **renew our knowledge as well as our hopes.**

## **1. The good pleasure and approval of Allah**

The greatest blessing, the greatest triumph and the greatest happiness is our Lord’s being well pleased with us. We learn this truth from the following Qur’anic verses:

“Allah has promised the believers, both men and women, Gardens through which rivers flow, therein to abide, and blessed dwellings in Gardens of perpetual bliss; and greater (than those) is Allah’s being pleased with them. That indeed is the supreme triumph.”<sup>1</sup>

“Allah will say: ‘This is the Day when their truthfulness (faithfulness and steadfastness) will benefit all who were true to their word

(to Allah). For them are Gardens through which rivers flow, therein to abide forever. Allah is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him. That is the supreme triumph.”<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Attaining the Mercy/ Favour of Allah**

“Then: as for those who believed and did good, righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into (Paradise, which is the embodiment of) His mercy. That is the obvious triumph.”<sup>3</sup>

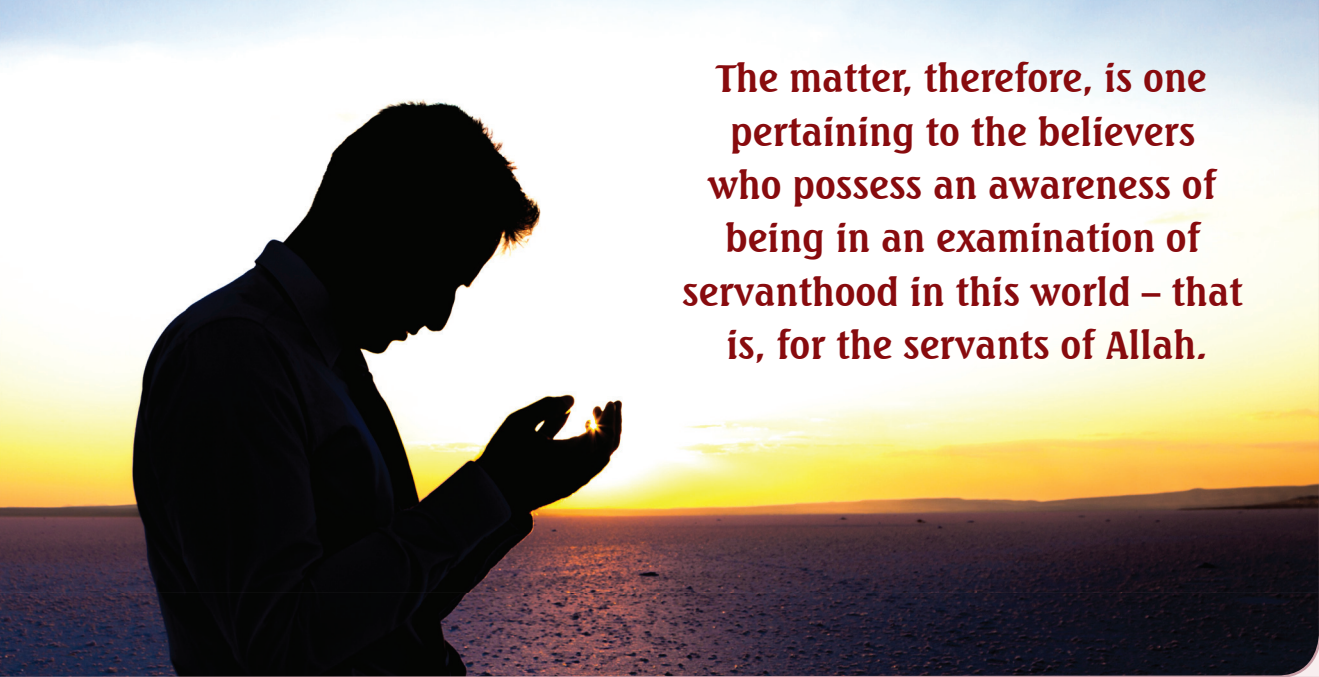
“And protect them from (doing) evil deeds (and the consequences thereof on the Day of Judgement). Whoever You protect from evils on that Day, You have surely had mercy on him; and that is the supreme triumph.”<sup>4</sup>

«As a grace from your Lord. That is the supreme triumph.»<sup>5</sup>

## **3. The Forgiveness of Sins**

“So that He may forgive you your sins and admit you into Gardens through which rivers flow, and into delightful dwellings in Gardens of perpetual bliss. That is the supreme triumph.”<sup>6</sup>

“On the Day when He will assemble you all for the Day of Assembly – that will be the day of loss for some (the unbelievers) and gain for some (the believers). Whoever believes

A silhouette of a man in a dark jacket is shown in profile, facing right, with his head bowed and hands clasped in a prayerful gesture. He is standing on a beach or a similar flat, open landscape. The background is a vibrant sunset or sunrise, with a bright orange and yellow glow on the horizon and a clear blue sky above. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

**The matter, therefore, is one pertaining to the believers who possess an awareness of being in an examination of servanthood in this world – that is, for the servants of Allah.**

**Although success in the world of deeds and action is equal to salvation in the Realm of Reckoning, the levels, varieties, outline and ultimate dimension of the latter is still a great subject of interest.**



in Allah and does good, righteous deeds, He will blot out from them their evil deeds (which they sometimes happen to commit), and admit them into Gardens through which rivers flow, therein to abide forever. That is the supreme triumph.”<sup>7</sup>

“And that He may admit the believing men and believing women into Gardens through which rivers flow, therein to abide, and may blot out from them their evil deeds. That is a supreme triumph in Allah’s sight.”<sup>8</sup>

#### **4. Being Spared Punishment**

“Whoever has been spared punishment on that Day, surely Allah has had mercy on him; and that is the manifest triumph.”<sup>9</sup>

“Except the former death (that we experienced in leaving the world), and we are not to be punished. (Then) this is most certainly the supreme triumph.”<sup>10</sup>

#### **5. Admission into Paradise**

“Allah has bought from the believers their selves and wealth because Paradise is for them. They fight in Allah’s cause, and they kill or are killed. This is a promise with which Allah has bound Himself in the Torah and in the Gospel and in the Qur’an. Who could be more faithful to his covenant than Allah? So

(O believers), glad tidings to you because of the bargain you have made with Him! That, indeed, is the supreme triumph.”<sup>11</sup>

“But those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, for them there are Gardens through which rivers flow. That is the great triumph.”<sup>12</sup>

“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise, they are the triumphant.”<sup>13</sup>

#### **6. Abiding in Paradise Permanently**

“These are the bounds set by Allah. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (by remaining within these bounds), Allah will admit him into Gardens through which rivers flow, abiding therein. That is the supreme triumph.”<sup>14</sup>

“Allah has prepared for them Gardens through which rivers flow, therein to abide. That is the supreme triumph.”<sup>15</sup>

“The first and foremost (to embrace Islam and excel others in virtue) among the Emigrants and the Helpers, and those who follow them in devotion to doing good, aware that Allah is seeing them – Allah is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him, and He has prepared for



them Gardens throughout which rivers flow, therein to abide forever. That is the supreme triumph.”<sup>16</sup>

“On that Day, you will see the believing men and the believing women (led swiftly toward Paradise), with their light shining forth before them and on their right hands. ‘Glad tidings for you today: Gardens through which rivers flow, (into which you will enter) to abide therein! This is indeed the supreme triumph.”<sup>17</sup>

## 7. Being the Addressee of Allah’s Glad Tidings

“For them is the glad tidings (of prosperity) in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. No change can there be in Allah’s decrees. That indeed is the supreme triumph.”<sup>18</sup>

### Conclusion

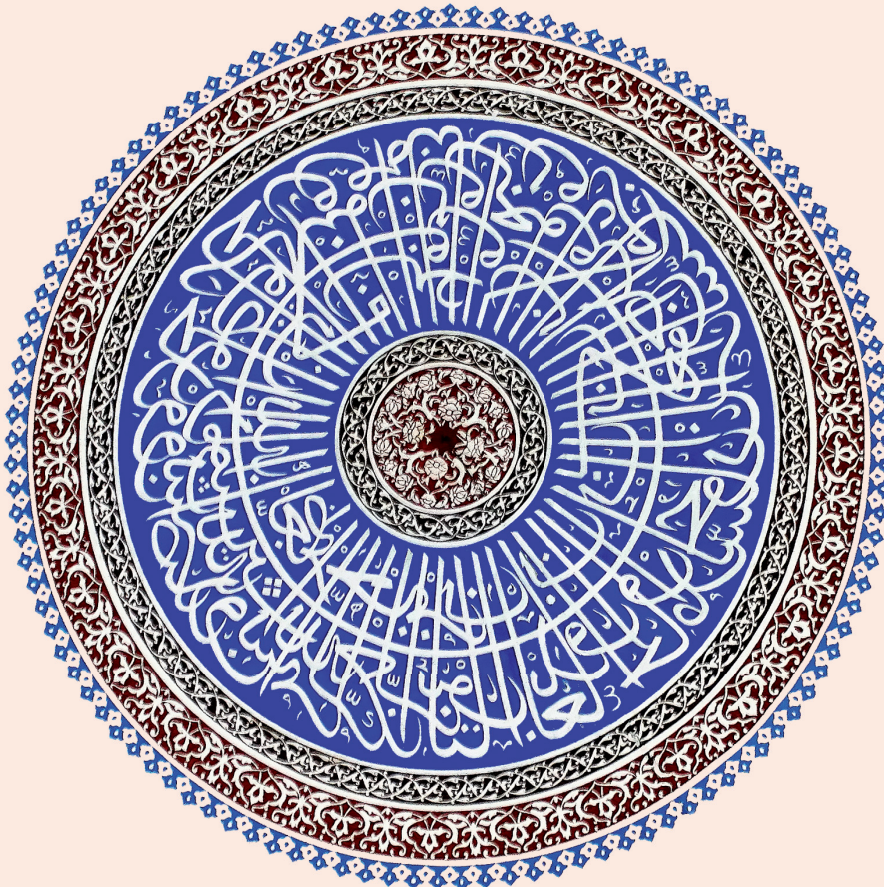
As we have seen from these Qur’anic verses, the journey of deliverance that begins

with obedience to Allah and His Messenger, is maintained without defiance, and which entails fear and reverence of Allah, truthful speech, deeds of righteousness, and taking on the cause of struggle for the sake of one’s beliefs, will end with entry into Paradise, the realm of bounty and blessing, to abide therein forever. For such an outcome to be attained without reckoning or torment is indeed the most beautiful deliverance and the greatest triumph and fortune.

While we must beseech our Lord on the Night of Deliverance (*Bara’a*) for precisely such a triumph, we must exert ourselves to the utmost to lead pure lives and we must promise ourselves to this end.

May our Lord enable us all to be of those who attain the supreme triumph.

**Notes:** 1) (9:72) 2) (5:119) 3) (45:30) 4) (40:9) 5) (44:57) 6) (61:12) 7) (64:9) 8) (48:5) 9) (6:16) 10) (37:59-60) 11) (9:111) 12) (85:11) 13) (59:20) 14) (4:13) 15) (9:89) 16) (9:100) 17) (57:12) 18) (10:64)





# CONSTANCY IN WORSHIP IN THE WAKE OF Ramadan

**A believer who fasts during the month of Ramadan experiences the inner peace and happiness of having fulfilled their duty towards their Lord.**

We have come to the end of yet another month of Ramadan that is the means of mercy, forgiveness and deliverance from the Fire. Another Ramadan, in which it is incumbent upon us to fast from the age of puberty until our death, has been erased from our map of life. We thus experience the joy of having attained the feast and festivity with the indescribable material and spiritual delight of fasting, the supererogatory *tarawih* prayers, the charity to be given at the end of Ramadan (*sadaqa al-fitr*), repentance, supplication and entreaty, and of the spirit of fellowship fostered through solidarity and cooperation. How will we ensure the continuation of such an atmosphere? What is the way to earning the festivities in the realm of the Hereafter, our eternal abode of rest, after having handed over the trust of life in this world to its Rightful Owner? Are not the festivals in the world in reality a rehearsal for those in Paradise?

The Qur'an frequently makes mention of pious believers who lead their lives in the fleeting world with the awareness of having been sent here for servanthood to Allah and

who do what belief deems necessary, and also of the multifarious bounties with which these believers will be favoured. It refers to the endlessness, ceaselessness and continuity of the bounties to be bestowed upon the believers in Paradise. "The Paradise promised to the God-revering, pious ones can be likened to a garden through which rivers flow. Its produce is everlasting, and so its shade. That is the ultimate outcome for those who keep from disobedience to Allah in reverence for Him and piety..."<sup>1</sup> As is evident, the blessings to be granted to the believers in Paradise are never-ending. They are not doomed to running out, to exhaustion and annihilation like worldly blessings. Everyone who believes and undertakes acts of righteousness will attain this blessing. There, there is no wealthy, no poor, no rank or position, and no difference in social status. The sole determinative there is belief and deeds of righteousness. And the field of application of these two principles is the transitory worldly realm. This is why worldly life is the abode of earning the Hereafter. Thus, the fleeting worldly life holds great significance with respect to earning the eternal realm. "We have surely made whatever is on the earth as an ornament for it (appealing to humanity), so that We may try them (by demonstrating it to themselves) which of them is best in conduct."<sup>2</sup> "He Who has created death and life, so that He may try you (and demonstrate to yourselves) which of

you is better in deeds..."<sup>3</sup> These verses affirm that the crux of life and death and the fleeting worldly life being made appealing is trial and examination, and that the foremost condition of this trial is "*absanu 'amal*," or deeds of righteousness.

The Qur'an describes the abode of Paradise and its bounties, which will be bestowed upon those who are able to lead pious lives in their ephemeral worldly existence, in so concrete a manner, that a person who reasons and is able to look at life with an eye of spiritual reflection cannot help but enter its field of attraction and thus ultimately exert endeavour to attain these bounties. "A likeness of Paradise which the God-revering, pious are promised is this: in it are rivers of water incorruptible (in taste, smell, and colour); and rivers of milk whose taste never changes; and rivers of wine delicious for the drinkers; and rivers of pure, clear honey. And in it, there are also fruits of every kind for them, as well as forgiveness from their Lord (to bring unforeseen blessings)..."<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, mention is made of beds lined with silk, thrones, green cushions, rich carpets, goblets and water gushing forth.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, reference is also made to such abounding fruits as cherries, bananas and grapes being offered to them.<sup>6</sup> All these have been promised to those who perceive their servanthood in the life of the world and



**Muslims experience a purification in their thought and feeling. This peace of mind and happiness projects onto their entire body, their inner and outer limbs and organs in Ramadan.**



**The believer enters a deep and profound contemplation during the month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was first revealed to humankind. They deepen in thought and increase their entreaty, supplication and remembrance.**

believe with certainty in the Hereafter, and who prepare for it accordingly.

In a Sacred Tradition (*hadith al-qudsi*), the Messenger of Allah states that Allah Almighty declares the following concerning the blessings to be given to the believers in Paradise: "I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard, nor has occurred to the human heart." The Messenger of Allah then cites the Qur'anic verse, "No soul knows what joyous means of happiness are kept hidden (reserved) for them as a reward for what they have been doing," (32:17) as testament to this.<sup>7</sup>

A great many verses of the Qur'an as well as Prophetic Traditions contain detailed accounts of Paradise and the blessings contained therein, to be bestowed upon the pious servants of Allah. These cannot possibly be elucidated in a short piece such as this. As indicated in the verse, "He has granted you from all that you ask Him. Were you to attempt to count Allah's blessings, you could not compute them..."<sup>8</sup> the material and spiritual bounties that Allah Almighty has bestowed upon the human being are innumerable.

Attaining the bounties that Allah Almighty will confer in the Hereafter is contingent upon ending our fleeting lives with belief. And this is again only attained

by means of Divine help. The month of Ramadan and fasting is a manifestation of the boundless mercy, forgiveness and favour of Allah Almighty towards His servants. In order to attain the good pleasure and approval of Allah and those blessings He promises to those of His servants who fear Him and who esteem His commands and prohibitions, one needs to exert themselves to lead every stage of their life in the spirit and rapture of Ramadan.

We must endeavour to carry out our acts of worship and devotion as much as we are able, whatever the circumstances. After commanding His Messenger to openly convey what was revealed to him and to pay no mind to the mocking, scornful and unsettling attitudes of the polytheists,<sup>9</sup> Allah Almighty describes precisely how he is to act in the following manner: "We certainly know that your breast is constricted by the (blasphemous) things that they say. But glorify your Lord with His praise (proclaim that He is absolutely above having any partners, and that all praise belongs to Him exclusively) and be one of those who prostrate themselves before Him (regularly in the Prayer, which strengthens their humility). And (continue to) worship your Lord until what is certain (death) comes to you."<sup>10</sup>

In actual fact, these instructions are principles that have been commanded to



all humanity through the person of Allah's Messenger. Whatever the circumstances, servanthood to Allah is to show constancy. Pause or respite in one's life of servanthood is out of the question. So long as life and consciousness along with it continues, then servanthood is to continue in accordance with the conditions in which one finds themselves and the acts of worship carried out. All those who believe must strive to continue their duty until they hand over the trust of their soul (to its Rightful Owner). Every believer must fulfil the requirements of being able to die as a Muslim, as indicated in the verse, "O

you who believe! Keep from disobedience to Allah in reverent piety, with all the reverence that is due to Him, and see that you do not die save as Muslims (submitted to Him exclusively),"<sup>11</sup> and must beseech Allah to take back the trust of their soul as a Muslim. For none can die as a Muslim but with His permission. With such feelings, we ask that our Lord enable us to attain well being and prosperity in the Ramadan to come.

Notes: 1) (13:35) 2) (18:7) 3) (67:2) 4) (47:15) 5) 55:54, 76; 56:15-16; 88:13-16. 6) 56:28-33; 78:32. 7) Muslim, Janna, 2, 3, 4, 5. 8) (14:34) 9) (15:94-96) 10) (15:97-99) 11) (3:102)







# ‘Umra During the Month of Ramadan and Its

# Excellence

**The Messenger of Allah said, “Perform ‘Umra during the month of Ramadan and it will be equal to a Hajj (in reward).” In this case, it becomes clear that the reward for an ‘Umra carried out during the month of Ramadan is different to that of an ‘Umra performed at other times.**

Literally meaning “a visit”, the term *‘umra* as a religious concept signifies visiting the Ka’ba – this visit itself being a special form of worship undertaken in pilgrim garb and in performing such rites as circumambulation (*tawaf*) and shuttling between Safa and Marwa (*sa’y*). What distinguishes the Hajj from the *‘Umra*, is visiting certain places such as ‘Arafat, Muzdalifa and Mina during a given period (the defined days or season of Pilgrimage).

According to the generally accepted view, ‘Umra has been referred to as *Hajj al-Asgar* (the Lesser Pilgrimage), and Pilgrimage during the Hajj season, or the Pilgrimage of the Messenger of Allah, referred to as *Hajj al-Akbar*, or the Greater Pilgrimage. Allah Almighty declares in the Qur’an: “Complete the Hajj (the Greater Pilgrimage) and the ‘Umra (the Lesser Pilgrimage) for Allah...”<sup>1</sup> In describing the excellence of the ‘Umra, the Messenger of Allah states: “One ‘Umra serves as an expiation for the sins committed between it and the next.”<sup>2</sup>

As can be seen, the Prophetic Tradition



indicates that the ‘Umra is expiation for minor sins.


Imam A’zam Abu Hanifa views the performing of ‘Umra on five days of the year as reproachful (*makruh*): These are the Day of ‘Arafa and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th days of the Feast of Sacrifice (*Eid al-Adha*).<sup>3</sup> Imam Malik deems performing the ‘Umra more than once in a single year, as reproachful. This is because Imam Malik regards the ‘Umra as a collective sunna (*sunna al-kifaya*).<sup>4</sup> Moreover, according to some scholars, for those who are in Mecca, performing more *tawaf* as opposed to more ‘umra has been deemed more meritorious.<sup>5</sup> The Messenger of Allah himself is reported to have performed four ‘Umras.<sup>6</sup>

That the reward of performing ‘Umra during the month of Ramadan is equivalent to that of the Hajj, or Greater Pilgrimage, is mentioned in the Prophetic Traditions. In fact, a woman by the name of Umm Ma’qil once came to the Messenger of Allah and said that she had prepared to undertake the Hajj but that she was prevented from doing so (her husband had become ill or had lost his camel), asking Allah’s Messenger what she should do in such a case. The Messenger of Allah said, “Perform ‘Umra during the month of Ramadan and it will be equal to

a Hajj (in reward).”<sup>7</sup> In this case, it becomes clear that the reward for an ‘Umra carried out during the month of Ramadan is different to that of an ‘Umra performed at other times. In fact, the word *ramadan* itself literally means, “The rain that comes at the end of summer and the beginning autumn, cleaning the earth of dust and dirt.” Furthermore, the term is also reported to denote, “Pebbles and stones intensely heated by the sun”. As is evident, there are indications here, to the effect of sins being wiped out, purged, burned and the carnal self being purified during the month of Ramadan. This is why glad tidings have been given exclusively to those who sincerely repent and fast during the month of Ramadan and those who perform ‘Umra during this month will be purified of sin.

### **The ‘Umra Ihram and the Fast**

Just as the ritual state of *ihram*, or consecration, renders prohibited some things that are normally religiously permissible, fasting too makes some lawful things unlawful (*haram*) for a given period. The fasting person who submits to the command of Allah and forbids certain things to themselves, restraining their carnal self, in this way exercises self-discipline. This is because the person has subjugated, by means of their



**The sacrificial offerings made at Mina in our day and the stoning at Jamarat are in a sense reminiscent of the defeat of the satanic thoughts and feelings beseting a person.**



**It is as though Allah Almighty, the All-Wise, invites His servants specially with the Hajj and 'Umra, wanting for them to turn to Him in earnest entreaty and seek protection in Him.**

intellect, the carnal self which had formerly beset them, and thus caused it to lose all hope in doing that which the religion has prohibited. For the fasting person perceives the fact that they refrain from eating the food and drink they are normally able to consume, provided they do not encroach upon the rights of others, and even from approaching their lawful spouse, purely for the purpose of obeying the Divine command. How then, in such a case, can a person who cannot take the wealth or property of another without their consent, commit those things of which Allah Almighty does not approve, and in His dominion? This is precisely what the *ihram* and the fast evokes and teaches, as Allah Almighty is the All-Wise and there is most certainly beauty in everything that He ordains. Acts of worship purge the human being of evil qualities by means of training of the carnal self. Thus, while fasting calls forth such feelings as compassion and generosity in enabling a person to master their ego, the state of purity or consecration (*ihram*) into which the pilgrim enters for the Greater and Lesser Pilgrimage, allows them to comprehend and experience that their special pilgrim attire and the shroud they will be wrapped up in while entering the grave, are one and the same.

The Messenger of God describes the

excellence of the Greater and Lesser Pilgrimage in the following words: "Let the Hajj and 'Umra follow one another, for they remove poverty and sin as the bellows remove rust from iron, gold and silver. And there is no reward for an accepted Hajj (one in which there is no sin or wrongdoing) but Paradise."<sup>8</sup> As is evident, if one 'Umra follows another, the minor sins committed between both of these will have been atoned for. It is as though those who performed an 'Umra previously are encouraged in the Prophetic Tradition to perform another one (for instance during the month of Ramadan). In addition, for those brothers and sisters who are unable to go to Hajj due to the quota allocated to their respective countries, their undertaking an 'Umra will perhaps allow them to receive the same rewards of the Hajj.

### **Memories of the Prophets**

The Hajj and 'Umra are a special invitation to remember and mention the great Prophets in those honoured places. After Prophet Adam, the forefather of humanity, and his wife Eve were removed from Paradise, it is in these sacred places that they turned to Allah in entreaty and wept at length, in supplication and repentance. Their repentance was accepted here as a result of this. It was again



**In describing the excellence of the ‘Umra, the Messenger of Allah states: “One ‘Umra serves as an expiation for the sins committed between it and the next.”**



here that the Prophet Abraham, his son Ishmael and his wife Hagar displayed their obedience to Allah and patiently endured the arduous trial coming from Him, thus attaining the highest honour of receiving His approval and good pleasure. Indeed, the *sa'y* between Safa and Marwa in their memory today, as one of the rites of the Greater and Lesser Pilgrimages, remind us of this. The well of Zamzam in the middle of the desert illustrates the mercy and grace of Allah Almighty toward His servants. Again, it was in this place that Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his beloved son Ishmael, where the complete submission to His will was displayed with Ishmael even accompanying his father in a spirit of festivity as he went to be sacrificed. The accursed Satan who tried to deceive Ishmael at this time, in the valley of Mina, was stoned and chased away by Ishmael himself. The sacrificial offerings made at Mina in our day and the stoning at *Jamarat* are in a sense reminiscent of the defeat of the satanic thoughts and feelings besetting a person.

### **The Special Visit**

The human being is in this world like a traveller who has embarked upon a great journey. The Greater and Lesser Pilgrimages

signify the special visit on this journey. And the wishes of guests are among those supplications that are not turned away.<sup>9</sup> It is as though Allah Almighty, the All-Wise, invites His servants specially with the Hajj and ‘Umra, wanting for them to turn to Him in earnest entreaty and seek protection in Him. This is why He has named the place that He has rendered sacred on earth, in the city of Mecca, *Bayt Allah* (the House of Allah), or *Bayt al-‘Atik* (the Ancient House).<sup>10</sup> By means of the Hajj and ‘Umra visits, the servant wholeheartedly accepts, as it were, this invitation to God’s special place, saying, “*Labbayk, Allahumma labbayk; labbayka la sharika laka labbayk; inna’l-hamda wa-ni’mata laka wa-l-mulk la sharika lak*. (Here I am at Your service O Lord, here I am. Here I am at Your service. No partner have You. Assuredly all praise and grace are Yours, and the dominion; No partner have You). For a believer who enters the ritual state of ihram by reciting the pilgrim’s ritual invocation of God (*talbiya*) in unison with the stones and trees,<sup>11</sup> has taken on the title *Dhuyuf al-Rahman*, as the special guests of the All-Merciful. As stated in a Prophetic Tradition: “Those who perform Hajj and the ‘Umra are the guests of Allah. If they call upon Him, He will answer them. And if they ask Him



for forgiveness, He will forgive them.”<sup>12</sup>

We congratulate those believers who perform their ‘Umra during the month of Ramadan with such contemplation and reflection. Happy are those servants who are honoured with this special favour of the All-Merciful! Happy are those who duly visit the Ka’ba, the Station of Abraham (*Maqam Ibrahim*), Safa and Marwa, and the Black Stone, and perform their worship here. Glad tidings to those who unite their fast with their ‘Umra worship and are able to return to their homes pure and free from sin!

#### Notes:

1) (2:196) 2) Muslim, Hajj, 237. 3) See Ibn Rushd, *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*, 1:263. 4) See ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Jaziri, *Kitab al-Fiqh ‘ala al-Mazahib al-Araba’a*, 1:687. 5) See Sa’id ‘Abd al-Ghani, *Irshad al-Sari ila Manasik al-Mulla ‘Ala al-Qari*, Egypt, n.d., 123. 6) See Bukhari, ‘Umra, 3. 7) See Muwatta, Hajj, 66. 8) Tirmidhi, Hajj, 2. 9) See Tirmidhi, Birr, 7. 10) See (3:96-97) 11) The excellence of the *talbiya* is described in a Prophetic Tradition as follows: “There is no Muslim who recites the *talbiya* except that whatever is on their right and left – trees and stones (and even tents and houses) – also recite the *talbiya* with them, until the earth resounds from here and here – meaning – on his right and left.” Tirmidhi, Hajj, 14. 12) Ibn Maja, Manasik, 5.

**For a believer who enters the ritual state of ihram by reciting the pilgrim’s ritual invocation of God (talbiya) in unison with the stones and trees, has taken on the title Dhuyuf al-Rahman, as the special guests of the All-Merciful.**



# Letters from the Khwajagan, Ramadan and Togetherness with Allah

According to Imam Rabbani this blessed month is a Divine gift to the Muslims for them to seize the matchless opportunity of the spiritual state of togetherness with Allah.

According to Imam Rabbani, the month of Ramadan is an opportunity for the Muslim to sever their attention to fleeting attachments, to concentrate on their spiritual life and to put it into order. The term *jam'iyyat* in Arabic denotes gathering and togetherness, while in the Sufi context it signifies a human being's putting their reason and heart together, in addition to referring to their togetherness with Allah. According to Imam Rabbani this blessed month is a Divine gift to the Muslims for them to seize the matchless opportunity of the spiritual state of togetherness with Allah. So much so that those who are unable to use this month wisely will not be able to pull themselves together during the remaining months of the year either and will constantly fall into separation (*tafriqa*) that is the opposite of unity (*jam'iyyat*). Imam Rabbani says in relation to this matter:

*"In this sense, the month of Ramadan has united within it all goodness and blessing. Every good that reaches a person throughout the year in any way, is a drop from the ocean of blessings*



*of the exalted month of Ramadan. The state of jam'iyyat achieved in this month is the cause for the jam'iyyat to be attained throughout the entire year. The state of tafriqa experienced during this month paves way for year-long tafriqa."* (Fourth Letter)

The term *jam'iyyat* employed here signifies the state of togetherness with Allah. While *tafriqa* denotes both disarray in spiritual state and separation from Allah. Imam Rabbani does not hold back in his criticism of those who fail to make the most of such an opportunity:

*"Happy is the person who does justice to and pleases the month of Ramadan! Woe upon the person who offends the month of Ramadan and who incurs its anger! That person has been deprived, at the same time, of its tremendous blessings and goodness."* (Fourth Letter)

### **The Remedy for the Carnal Self**

The fast of the month of Ramadan is a special bestowal of Allah Almighty upon the Muslims, which is aimed at breaking the arrogance of the carnal self (*nafs*) and purifying it. This is because the human being is to see, through hunger, how weak they really are and in this way be freed of seeing themselves as superior to others.

*"Esteemed brother, know that the evil-*

*commanding self (nafs al-ammara) forever yearns, by virtue of its disposition, to acquire position and power. Its entire ambition is to be superior to its peers. Its sole desire, one that has permeated its entire being, is for all creatures to be in need of it, and to respect its commands and prohibitions. It itself does not wish to be in need of, or subordinate to anyone. All of this amounts to nothing other than the carnal soul's quest for divinity and its seeing itself as partner to its Exalted Creator, Who has no partner or equal. So low is the carnal self that, not content with partnership, it seeks to be the sole master and ruler and wants that everything be at its beck and call... This means to say that strengthening the carnal self, fulfilling its desires of wealth, position, rank, superiority to all others and seeing all others as inferior, is tantamount to aiding and strengthening the enemy of Allah Almighty, such that one ought to see just how grievous and unspeakable a crime this is... Allah Almighty declares in a Sacred Tradition: "Glory and Majesty belong exclusively to Me. He who contends with Me in regard to them I shall punish in the Fire."* (Muslim, Birr, 38)

In this respect, the month of Ramadan disciplines the carnal self through fasting and hunger and teaches all Muslims how to thwart its most natural inclinations. The Ramadan fast must be observed, however, in the manner taught to us by the Messenger of

**The fast of the month of Ramadan is a special bestowal of Allah Almighty upon the Muslims, which is aimed at breaking the arrogance of the carnal self (*nafs*) and purifying it.**





Allah, in striving to adhere to all its conditions.

*“The wisdom behind the sending of Prophets and the legal responsibilities is to render powerless this compulsive self and to frazzle it. The desires of the carnal self are broken as a person obeys the commandments of Islam. It is for this reason that adhering to a single commandment of the shari’a is more potent and effectual in shattering the desires of the carnal self than thousands of years of undertaking austerities and spiritual discipline conducted in one’s own way. What is more, if this austerity and self-discipline does not conform to the shari’a, then it serves only to strengthen and aggravate carnal desires. The Indian priests called Jukiyya (Yogis) and Brahmins advanced in undertaking austerities and self-discipline, but, despite this, will not see the benefit of having done so due to their training not being in conformity with the shari’a. What they achieve as a result is nothing save the strengthening of their carnal self...”*

As can be gleaned from these words, if fasting – a form of austerity and disciplining in Islam as with the other acts of worship – is not observed in accordance to its proper conditions, far from disciplining a person’s carnal self, they actually serve to exacerbate it. In our day, there are some who fast for such purposes as dieting or losing weight. A fast which is observed with righteous intent serves to ensure the health of the human being in

any case, but it is not right for a person to fast purely with this intention. Imam Rabbani offers us examples in this regard from the mystics of the far east, and warns us. They undertake austerities by remaining hungry for long periods of time. However, the aim is not servanthood to Allah but strengthening the spirit and thus displaying supernatural feats, from which the carnal self derives enormous pleasure. The carnal self endures every kind of difficulty in order to render itself superior to others.

### **Purification of the Carnal Self and Remembrance of Allah**

According to Imam Rabbani another form of worship that is important in purification of the carnal self, and the most important practice of all Sufi orders, is remembrance and invocation of Allah (*dhikr*). The carnal self weakens with fasting, but there is a need for other forms of worship for the strengthening of the spirit. Remembrance of Allah and mention of His Names, or *dhikr*, heads these acts of worship.

*“In summary, so long as the carnal self is not purified and freed of the sense of superiority for which it yearns, it is impossible to attain salvation. Ridding oneself of these diseases is imperative if an eternal annihilation is to*

**The Ramadan fast must be observed, however, in the manner taught to us by the Messenger of Allah, in striving to adhere to all its conditions.**



be avoided. The blessed statement (*La ilaha illallah*), is the most useful, most effectual means in purification of the carnal self as it chases away all false objects of worship. The greats of the Nashbandi Sufi order have preferred this felicitous statement for the purification of the carnal self... Belief needs to be constantly renewed by frequent repetition of the formula *La ilaha illallah*, so long as the carnal self maintains such vices as obstinacy, depravity, duplicity, disorder and corruption. The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, says: **"Say, *La ilaha illallah*' and renew your belief."** (Ahmad, Musnad, 8695) This needs to be repeated at all times, as the *nafs al-ammara* is forever in (a state of) vice. Thus, the Messenger of Allah says in relation to the excellence of these words: "Were the earth and heavens and all that is in and between them to

be placed on one side of a scale and this statement on the other side, the latter would outweigh the former." (Ahmad, 6583, Hakim, Mustadrak, 154)


The Muslim must strive to preoccupy themselves with remembrance and mention of Allah constantly, and especially during the month of Ramadan, and thus try to remove all others from the heart. The sword of *La* (No) is the ultimate weapon in smiting the neck of worldly attachments. Let us end this piece with the following poem of Imam Rabbani:

*"In the palace of illallah (except Allah), across the neck of all other than Him,*

*If you smite not with the sword of 'La', you cannot attain Union with Him.* (Fifty-Second Letter)



# Spiritual Benefits of Ramadan



Zakat instils social consciousness in us, through which, we can have more taqwa and be more thankful for Allah's blessings upon us.


## 1- Attaining Taqwa:

Allah says in the Qur'an, "O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that attain *Taqwa*." (Surah Baqarah 2:183)

Hence, the real aim of fasting is to attain *taqwa*.

Taqwa comes from the root word 'waqiya', which means to protect. It is a protection from the Anger of Allah and His Punishment. Taqwa **does not necessarily mean fear**. But it means protection, along with fear of Allah. This is why taqwa is used to describe the performing of good deeds, which please Allah. Taqwa, in essence, means God consciousness. Taqwa is one of the most profound concepts in Islam. The word taqwa and its derivatives are mentioned in 239 verses of the Qur'an and mentioned countless times in many ahadith. It is mentioned in the Qur'an, "Surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one with the most Taqwa" (Surah Hujurat 49:13).





We should search for Laylat'ul Qadr  
in the odd numbered nights, in the  
last ten days of Ramadan.

## 2- Staying Away From Sins:

The Prophet (upon him peace) said, "One who, while fasting, neither guards his tongue from telling lies nor refrains from doing bad deeds does not respect his fast, while Allah does not approve of mere abstention from food... When you fast, you should not speak ill of anybody, nor should you be boisterous or noisy. If anybody speaks ill of you or tries to pick a quarrel with you, do not respond to him in the same manner; rather, simply tell him that you are fasting."

Fasting restrains our temper, helps us in keeping away from backbiting and inappropriate behaviour:

"Whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink." (Sahih al Bukhari)

## 3- Being More Generous:

Abdullah ibn Umar would prefer to eat his iftar with the poor. Whenever he broke his fast at home, he never ate his fill, so that if a needy person visited, 'Abdullah could give him his iftar. Thus he would end up virtually "fasting" that whole night too! He used to give away sweets in charity saying, 'I am aware of Allah's saying; "You shall not attain piety until you spend out of that which is beloved to you" (Surah Ali 'Imran: 92) and Allah knows that I love sweets.'

We should be more willing to spend our wealth to help those less fortunate in the holy month of Ramadan. Ubaid Ibn Umair said, 'On the Day of Judgement people will be gathered as hungry as they have ever been and as thirsty as they have ever been and as naked as they have ever been. Then, he who has fed [others] for the sake of Allah, Allah will feed him till he is full. He who has given to water to others, for the sake of Allah, Allah will give him water and he who has clothed others for the sake of Allah, Allah will clothe him.'

We should always remember that even the rewards of the smallest of good deeds can be greater than Mount Uhud, by the Mercy of Allah. Each of our good deeds are upgraded by at least one level. A non-obligatory action commands the reward of a fardh (obligatory action), and the reward of a fardh is multiplied by seventy. Regarding Ramadan, the Prophet (upon him peace) is reported to have said:

"...Whoever draws nearer (to Allah) by performing any of the (optional) good deeds in (this month) shall receive the same reward as performing an obligatory deed at any other time, and whoever discharges an obligatory deed in (this month) shall receive the reward of performing seventy obligations at any other time..."

During Ramadan, special evening prayers are conducted during which long portions of the Qur'an are recited. These special prayers are known as 'tarawih'.



#### **4- Doing good deeds wipe out our sins:**

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever observes fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah's rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven."

The month of *Ramadan* is a great opportunity for returning to Allah with repentance. It is the month of mercy, erasing mistakes, expiating evil deeds, salvation from Hellfire and attaining Paradise. The fortunate person is he who knows this and hastens to the actions that draw him near to His Lord by turning to Him in repentance, seeking forgiveness and feeling regret for all his slips and sins.

If we do not repent in Ramadan, then when will we? If we do not repent when the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hellfire are closed and devils are chained up, then when will we repent?

It is the month of repentance, forgiveness, salvation from Hell fire and the Prophet (upon him peace) said: "May his nose be rubbed in the dust, a man for whom Ramadan comes and then goes before he is forgiven!" (Tirmidhi)

#### **5- Learning Discipline:**

Ramadan is a training ground for gaining self-discipline and restraint. We learn in this month how to discipline ourselves for the sake of Allah. In our morning and evening, we follow a strict schedule of eating and drinking. We are constantly aware that even in our such mundane activities as eating and drinking, we must remain under divine injunctions. We change our habits in our daily routines because we learn that we are not the servants and slaves to our habits, but always the servants of Allah. Then after Ramadan, we should keep this spirit of discipline in our daily lives.

#### **6- Community bonds are strengthened:**

"Keep up the salah and pay the zakat, and bow your heads with those who bow theirs."  
(Qur'an, 2:43)

Zakat instils social consciousness in us, through which, we can have more taqwa and be more thankful for Allah's blessings upon us. Zakat encourages equity and connects us with people around us. It allows us to help needy people.

And also family, friends, and neighbors all commonly increase their interactions, sharing in the spirit of bonding that Ramadan



inspires. Community bonds are strengthened in this beautiful time of Ramadan.

## 7- The Night of Power (Laylat'ul Qadr):

“We have indeed revealed this (message) in the Night of Power: And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein come down the Angels and the Spirit (Jibrael) by Allah's permission, on every errand: Peace! It is until the emergence of dawn!” (Qur'an, 97:1-5)

In the Night of Power (Laylat'ul Qadr), the Holy Qur'an was sent down from Lawh-i Mahfuz (the Preserved Tablet) to the earth. We should search for Laylat'ul Qadr in the odd numbered nights, in the last ten days of Ramadan. So, the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th or 29th night of Ramadan could be Laylat'ul Qadr.

Sayyidah Aisha stated that the Prophet (upon him peace) said, “Look for Lailat'ul-Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan.” (Bukhārī)

The Night of Power is the night of spiritual bliss. The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) is reported to have said concerning Ramadan:

“Verily this month has come to you; and therein is a night which is better than a

thousand Months. Whosoever is deprived of it, is deprived of all good; and none is deprived of its good except a totally unfortunate person.”

“Whosoever stands up (in prayer) at the Night of Power out of faith and hopeful of reward, all his past sins will be forgiven.”

Sayyidah Aisha stated: “I asked the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace), “If I find Lailatul Qadr then what should I do? The Messenger of Allah said, recite this Dua.” Allahumma innaka ‘afuwwun tuhibbul ‘afwa fa’fu ‘annee.” (Tirmidhi)

## 8- Tarawih Prayer:

During Ramadan, special evening prayers are conducted during which long portions of the Qur'an are recited. These special prayers are known as ‘tarawih’.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) said, “Whoever establishes prayers during the nights of Ramadan faithfully out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not for showing off), all his past sins will be forgiven.”

We look forward to the coming of Ramadan with great longing and expectation because a special spiritual atmosphere will prevail in our lives. May Allah accept our all good deeds and grant us sincerity and devotion. Ameen!





# THREE DUTIES DURING THE MONTH OF RAMADAN: Contemplation, Vigilance and INTROSPECTION

The month of Ramadan is the most auspicious time for such a contemplative vigilance to be undertaken. For in this blessed month, as mentioned above, thoughts are clearer, hearts purer and feelings more unclouded.

In our day, the inner worlds of human beings are suffering and in great distress. Reaching the month of Ramadan at such a time, where every kind of vice is perpetrated, where inconceivable oppressions are inflicted, where the aggrieved are crushed and where the 'profit idol' takes precedence over the concern over the religiously prohibited and permissible, is a tremendous bounty and blessing.

A believer who fasts during the month of Ramadan experiences the inner peace and happiness of having fulfilled their duty towards their Lord. A believer who fasts feels a great expansion in their heart. They experience a purification in their thought and feeling. This peace of mind and happiness projects onto their entire body, their inner and outer limbs and organs. The people of our day have become caught up in the whirlpool of secularisation, and have become affected by hedonistic, pragmatist, atheistic and materialist thought. Crushed beneath financial crises, humankind has fallen into

the trap of the idol of consumerism given precedence by capitalism and has become caught between the grinding wheels of a mechanical life. This is why an important proportion of people have suffered in terms of their mental health. The misery of people leading their lives amidst all these realities has become the natural scheme of things. The month of Ramadan has come to the rescue in precisely such a climate and by throwing open its doors of mercy to those people depressed and writhing in helplessness, it has welcomed them into its abode.

The term '*ramadan*' itself, in examining its derivations, comes to mean a variety of different things. The word *ramadan* is derived from the word *ramadiyyun*, which denotes the rain cleaning the earth of dust and dirt. Just as this rain cleans the earth, the month of Ramadan has assumed such a name due to its purifying the believers of sin and cleansing their hearts. By means of the the mercy of Allah Almighty and the heat of the fast, sins are burned in this month and hearts purified. In short, the word *ramadan* encompasses such literal meanings as cleanliness and burning.<sup>1</sup>

With is fast, its acts of worship, spirit of fellowship and cooperation, the month of Ramadan purifies both the individual as well as broader society. With the breath that is drawn in the month of Ramadan's climate of mercy, the individual is to be revived and the

society is to be revived with the water of life. This effect that this month, the beginning of which is mercy, the middle forgiveness and the end deliverance from Hellfire, has on the rest of society and the dynamism that it endows the belief and thought of human beings, cannot be ensured by anything else. Hence, the month of Ramadan is a most blessed month with respect to its serving as a means for the wakening and deliverance of the whole Muslim community and even all humanity. In short, this month:

**1- Is a month of contemplation:** A believer who reaches the month of Ramadan comes to their senses, contemplates the reason for their existence, strengthens their connection with Allah Almighty and remembers their responsibility towards their family, their relatives, their society and all humanity. The believer enters a deep and profound contemplation during the month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was first revealed to humankind. They deepen in thought and increase their entreaty, supplication and remembrance, as declared in the Qur'anic verse: **"Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day (with their periods shortening and lengthening), there are signs (manifesting the truth) for the people of discernment. They remember and mention Allah (with**

**A believer who fasts during the month of Ramadan experiences the inner peace and happiness of having fulfilled their duty towards their Lord.**





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their tongues and hearts), standing and sitting and lying down on their sides (whether during the Prayer or not), and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth. (Having grasped the purpose of their creation and the meaning they contain, they conclude and say): ‘Our Lord, You have not created this (the universe) without meaning and purpose. All-Glorified You are (in that You are absolutely above doing anything meaningless and purposeless), so save us from (having wrong conceptions of Your acts, and acting against Your purpose for creation, and so deserving) the punishment of the Fire!’<sup>2</sup> Especially during the month of Ramadan, the believer reflects upon the principles in the Divine message: “This is a Book, which We send down to you, full of blessings, so that they (all conscious, responsible beings) may ponder its verses and that the people of discernment may reflect on it and be mindful,”<sup>3</sup> and exerts themselves tirelessly to grasp the reason for the Qur’an’s revelation. The believer must not deepen only in the words of the Qur’an, by constant recitation, but must use the month of Ramadan as an opportunity to deepen in its meaning also.

**2- Vigilance (*Muraqaba*)** The believer must engage in self-examination during this month and must reach the depths of the world of their heart, or their inner world.

They must reflect at length upon their faithfulness towards their Lord, their efforts in the way of His religion, their humility towards the people and upon their sincerity and altruism. The believer must not lose sight of their being under the constant supervision of Allah Almighty and must intensify their contemplation during the month of Ramadan. In the Qur’anic verses, “**Assuredly, it is We Who have created human, and We know what suggestions his soul makes to him. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. Remember that the two recording angels (appointed to record his speech and deeds), seated on the right and on the left, receive and record. Not a word does he utter but there is a watcher (*raqib*) by him, ever-present;**”<sup>4</sup> and “**Yet there are angel-guardians (watching) over you – noble and honorable, recording, who know what you do,**”<sup>5</sup> it is made clear that all human beings are being watched, that all their states and actions are being monitored, and that the gift of life has not been bestowed upon them in vain. In the light of these and similar verses, the believer is required to behave and act in the awareness of their lives being constantly observed. The month of Ramadan is the most auspicious time for such a contemplative vigilance to be undertaken. For in this blessed month, as mentioned above, thoughts are clearer, hearts purer and feelings more unclouded.



**3- Introspection (Muhasaba):** The believer needs to lead their life in the self-interrogation indicated in the Prophetic Tradition, **“Call yourselves to account before you are called to account.”**<sup>6</sup> As clearly stated in the Qur’anic verse which reads: **“So We will surely question those to whom Messengers were sent (as to how they responded to them), and We will surely question those sent with Our Message (concerning their duty of conveying it and how their peoples reacted to it),”**<sup>7</sup> peoples will be asked about whether they followed the Messengers who were sent to them and the Messengers will be asked whether or not they fulfilled their duty of conveying the message. The believer conducts their self-interrogation and introspection with deep conviction as to the truths indicated in the verses. They subject themselves to self-criticism. They question their acts of worship, their commitment to the truth and their responsibilities to the people. As indicated in the verse, **“Indeed, human will be an eye-witness (providing evidence) against himself, Even though he puts forth his excuses,”**<sup>8</sup> the human being knows exactly how sincere they are. They themselves know the intentions in their inner world and the tempests raging within the depths of their conscience. At the very least, they know their own self better than they know another. The month of Ramadan ought to be, in a sense, the month of self-criticism, of introspection

and of coming to know oneself. Within such a framework, the believer deems the month of Ramadan their yearly self-interrogation, and acts accordingly. They scrutinise their lives to the minutest detail.

Believers who use the month of Ramadan as the month of contemplation, vigilance and introspection and who act accordingly, will attain ultimate success and will have done justice to Ramadan. It must not be forgotten that each month of Ramadan conferred upon us from the age of puberty onwards constitutes the most precious moments of our lives. If a person with a life-span of seventy years is assumed to have reached puberty at the age of fifteen, then the number of Ramadans designated for them is fifty five. This number decreases with each passing year. None of us know how many years we have left and how many Ramadans we will live to see, but we have no doubt as to their constant decrease. In that case, we must deem every Ramadan a new beginning and engage in self-criticism, contemplative vigilance and reflection. May Allah Almighty enable us to be of those who call themselves to account and may this month of Ramadan be blessed for us all.

Notes: **1)** For a comprehensive discussion, see, Elmalılı, Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur’ân Dili*, Istanbul, 1971, I:643-644. **2)** (3:190-191) **3)** (38:29) **4)** (50:16-18) **5)** (82:10-12) **6)** Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 25. **7)** (7:6) **8)** (75:14-15)



# THE SOCIETY

## of the Age of Bliss -||-

The Companions' greatest concern was to understand the Book of the Almighty, to acquire its manifestations of wisdom and act in accordance. They had discovered the taste of life in repeating the Qur'ân over and over, listening to it and implementing it in their lives.

### The Functions of Reason and the Heart were in Harmony

The functions of reason and the heart, which ushered the Believers of the time to perfection, were used jointly, in harmony. By keeping their enthusiasm and love ever alive, they were able to grow their contemplation ever deeper. They lived with the complete understanding that this life is nothing but a land of trial. Their hearts became accustomed to the flows of Divine Power and Majesty vibrant within the universe. They never showed any signs of tiredness in the long, arduous journeys they undertook to Central Asia, even to China, for the sake of enjoining the good and speaking against evil.

Guided by the Qur'ânic command forbidding him from throwing himself in danger with his very own hands, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari -Allah be well-pleased with him-, joined military expedition of Istanbul, despite being well over eighty years of age at the time. In the end, he presented his mortal corpse to Istanbul as an endless memory and source of inspiration. His successors took the light of



**A spiritual life of Islamic sensitivity is necessary for any human being. Only a superb spiritual blend could bring about beautiful cultural and artistic expressions and provide breadth and depth to contemplation.**

guidance as far as Andalus.

Uqbah ibn Nafi –May Allah have mercy on his soul-, of the Tabiun generation, was sent to Africa during the time of the Umayyads. He proceeded to capture Qayrawan and designated Zuhayr ibn Qays as administrator. “I have sold my soul to Allah and I shall fight those who deny Him until eternity”, he then said to Zuhayr, instructing him his wishes should anything happen to him.

The all conquering Uqbah then continued his expeditions. The only thing stopping him was now the ocean. Steering his horse into the crashing waves, as he said:

“If it was not for this ocean, My Lord, I would have continued to struggle in your way, along the towns lying in front of me!”<sup>11</sup>  
(Ibn’ul-Asir, al-Kamil fi’t-Tarih, Beirut, 1385, IV, 105-106)

The first three centuries of the Ottomans who appeared in their wake and whose foundations were laid by a mere 400 warriors, was a virtual repeat of the age of the Companions.

### **Contemplation Became Profound**

The society of Ignorance, previously living in pitch darkness, became the “truly knowledgeable” through the guidance of the Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace-. The twilight made way for day, winter for spring. The quality of contemplation

developed. People began reflecting on how the human being develops from a mere drop of water, trees from tiny seeds and like examples in nature. Their lives were aligned to the pleasure of Allah, glory unto Him. Compassion, kindness and the quality of conveying the truth enjoyed a splendor never before witnessed.

### **Communicating Islam became Their Most Enjoyable Activity**

The Companions displayed the most beautiful Muslim character. Enduring all kinds of hardship, they sought the pleasure of the Almighty at every breath they took, in each moment of their lives. With such a spiritual blend, they avidly enjoined the good and the right and prevented others from evil and immorality. The most enjoyable and meaningful moments of life, for them, was when they would convey to others the message of tawhid.

The Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- could not meet women as often as he would meet men to communicate Islam. Guzayya -Allah be well-pleased with her-, a female who had entered the fold of Islam in the Meccan period was therefore providing much assistance in the spread of Islam. Secretly mixing in with Qurayshi women, she would extend to them the invitation to the Truth. She continued doing this until the idolaters of Mecca eventually found out. They seized her and sent her away to exile



**To implement the Holy Qur'ân in their lives, they abandoned their entire wealth and properties, even their hometowns, and immigrated to Medina, for which they were more than ready to even let go of their lives.**



with a group of people from Daws, who were happening to be leaving Mecca at the time. They had her mounted, without a saddle, on a camel and depriving her of water, they then began torturing her until she entirely lost her sight, hearing and mind. Remorseful after having witnessed Guzayya's -Allah be well-pleased with her-- a unbelievable patience, courage and sincerity of iman, the group from Daws then ended up accepting Islam. (Ibn Saad, VIII, 155-157; Ibn Habbib, al-Muhabbbar, p. 81-82, 92; Abu Nuaym, Hilya, II, 66-67; Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah, IV, 447)

Recovering thereafter, Guzayya -Allah be well-pleased with her- made her Hegira to Medina just after the Prophet of Allah -upon him blessings and peace-. Some reports suggest she came to the Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- as an ambassador for the Abdulqays tribe.

Once a woman taking some water to her tribe came across the Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- and witnessed one of his miracle. Upon her return, she explained her experience to her tribe, hearing which they accepted Islam in their entirety.

Neither were slave-women lagging behind free women in putting their efforts behind conveying Islam. In fact, a slave-girl from Isfahan, Persia, who had become Muslim before Salman the Persian -Allah be well-pleased with him-, guided him to the presence of the Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace-.

Another Companion, given three final minutes before his awaiting execution at the hands of idolaters, thanked the miserable men, adding, "That means I have another three minutes to invite you to Islam!" In underlining the importance of tabligh, Abu Hurayrah -Allah be well-pleased with him- used to say: "We used to hear the following spoken among the Companions: On the Day of Judgment a person will be grabbed by the scruff of the neck by another person who he never knew. Taken aback, he will ask: 'What do you want from me? I do not even know you!' The other person will then say, 'Despite seeing me on Earth committing evil deeds, you never used to warn me and hold me back!' The man will then proceed to charge him in the Divine court of justice."

### **They Held Fast to the Qur'ân**

Even the most difficult circumstances could not hold the Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- back from the Qur'ân to the Companions. Abu Talha -Allah be well-pleased with him- one day saw the Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- teaching Qur'ân to the students of the Suffa, standing. In order to keep his back, bent double from excruciating hunger, straight, he had tied a stone around his belly. (Abu Nuaym, Hilya, I, 342)

Thus the Companions' greatest concern was to understand the Book of the Almighty, to acquire its manifestations of wisdom and

act in accordance. They had discovered the taste of life in repeating the Qur'ân over and over, listening to it and implementing it in their lives.

In short, the Companions lived with the Qur'ân and its content, devoting their entire lives to the Word of the Almighty. They showed a feat of self-sacrifice never before witnessed in history. They were subjected to worst kinds of oppression and torture but never did they compromise what they believed in. To implement the Holy Qur'ân in their lives, they abandoned their entire wealth and properties, even their hometowns, and immigrated to Medina, for which they were more than ready to even let go of their lives.

The Companions were in a continuous endeavor to learn and put into practice each ayah of the Holy Qur'ân. They never neglected the Qur'ân, even during the most dangerous situations.

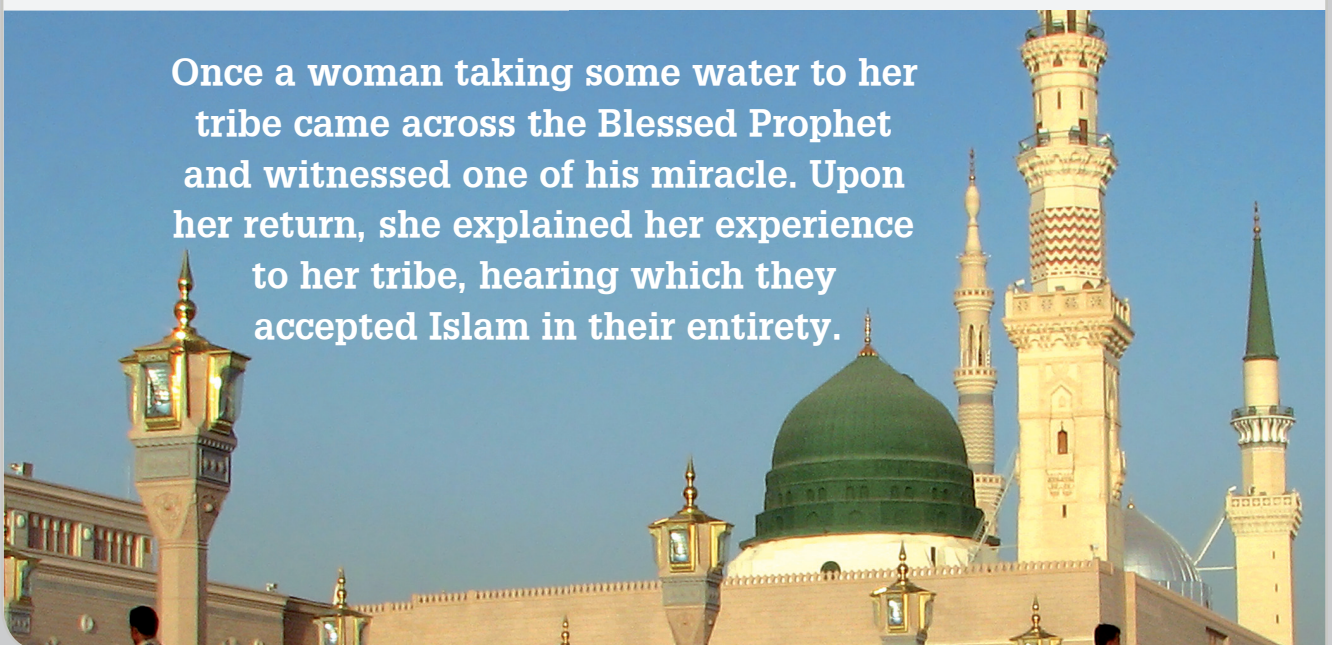
Abbad -Allah be well-pleased with him-, appointed by the Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- to keep guard over the Muslim forces had begun offering salat. The enemy, who had been on the lookout all along, began shooting arrows at him. Only after being shot with two or three arrows did Abbad -Allah be well-pleased with him- bow down to ruku and then to sajdah and eventually complete his salat. He then

informed his fellow guard Ammar -Allah be well-pleased with him-. "Why did you not tell me when you had first been shot?" asked Ammar, somewhat astounded. "I was reciting a surah of the Qur'ân and I did not want to break my salat before completing it," replied Abbad. "But when the arrows hit me one after another I stopped reciting and bowed to ruku. But by Allah, had there not been the fear of losing this spot whose protection the Messenger of Allah has ordered, I would have preferred death over cutting my recital of the chapter short." (Abu Dawud, Taharat, 78/198; Ahmad, III, 344; Bayhaki, Dalail, III, 459; Ibn Hisham, III, 219; Waqidi, I, 397)

The Companions led a life within the Qur'ân's content. For them, each pillar of Islam was an insatiable taste. Each revealed ayah was like a feast from the heavens. All efforts were channeled to the aim of properly understanding and living the Qur'ân and of setting the best example in regard. How great a portrait of virtue and testimony of an enthusiastic iman it is that, as mihr or dowry, a female Companion would only require her soon-to-be husband teach her the parts of the Qur'ân he knew.

The Companions took the enthusiastic effort of the Noble Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- towards the Qur'ân as example and as a result the small town of Medina became filled with huffaz and scholars.

Once a woman taking some water to her tribe came across the Blessed Prophet and witnessed one of his miracle. Upon her return, she explained her experience to her tribe, hearing which they accepted Islam in their entirety.





## Factors that Directed the Companions to the Holy Qur'ân

a) They were an unlettered society, never having come under the influence of a foreign culture. They were therefore able to focus all their intellectual and spiritual attention on the Qur'ân. As a result, they produced a crowning culture; a culture which prevented injustice and oppression and acknowledged the right to life of every single creature on Earth. A spiritual life of Islamic sensitivity is necessary for any human being. Only a superb spiritual blend could bring about beautiful cultural and artistic expressions and provide breadth and depth to contemplation. And only then can society raise men of the caliber of Mawlana Rumi, Sinan the Architect, Fuzuli the Poet and the likes.

b) Because the ayat of the Qur'ân were gradually revealed, it made their memorization, practice and spiritual digestion of it easier. It provided the generation of Companions to undertake a gradual learning program.

c) That reciting the Qur'ân during salat was made necessary meant that the Companions were continuously instilled with the Divine Word and that resulted in an increased bond. They were especially under the constant influence of Surah al-Fatiha, repeated at every rakah in a salat.

d) To make sure of that their judgments were correct and their deeds were accepted,

they took lessons from the parables of the Holy Qur'ân.

## The Entire Humankind has Admired Them

Such was the Asr-u Saadah, the Age of Bliss that the Holy Qur'ân generated in a very short amount of time. The entire world has since watched that unique generation behind admiring eyes.

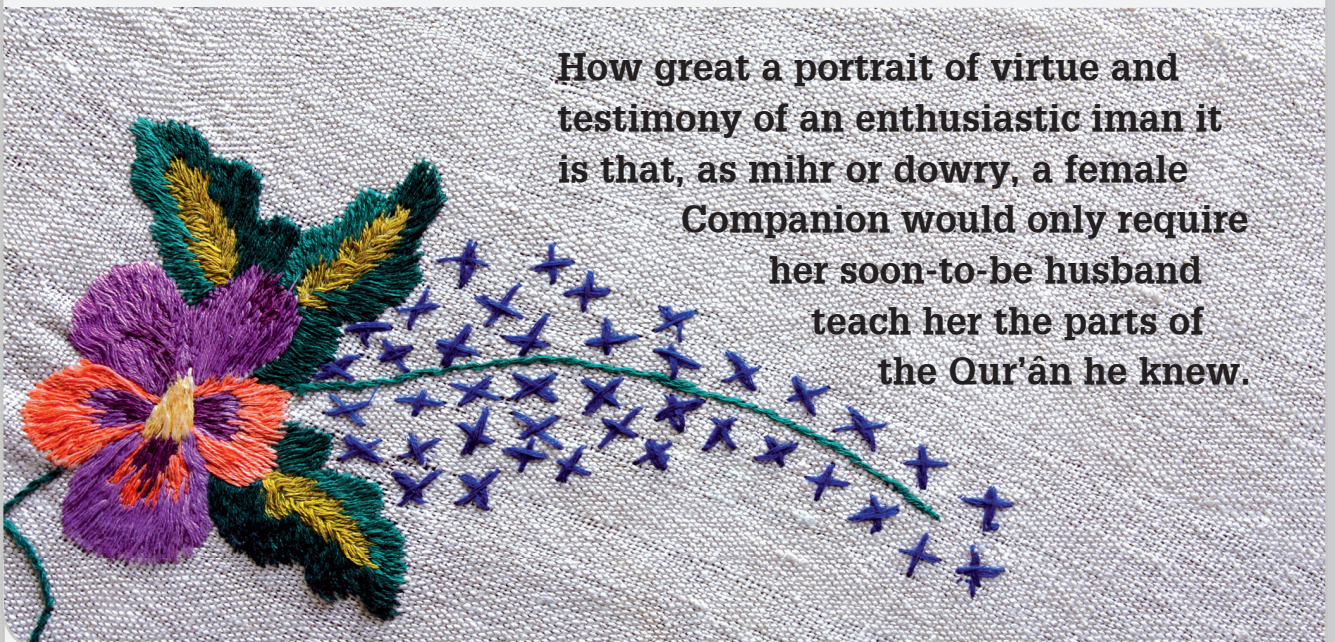
If the entire psychologists, sociologists, pedagogues, social-anthropologists, philosophers and social engineers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century were to join forces, could they ever be able to train and raise just a handful of human beings of the blend of an entire society like that of the Companions?

The Qur'ân and the Sunnah, which effectively brought about the Asr-u Saadah, still retain their liveliness, influence and applicability to this day. Societies that have clung onto Islam have always flourished while those who have abandoned it have perished.

After examining Islam's principles of justice and freedom, La Fayette (d. 1834) has in fact felt obliged to pay homage to the Blessed Prophet –upon whom blessings and peace- in admiration:

“O you magnificent Arab! No matter how great your praises were they would not suffice; for you have discovered the very notion of justice!” (Kâmil Miras, Tecrid-i Sarih Tercemesi, IX, 289)

**How great a portrait of virtue and testimony of an enthusiastic iman it is that, as mihr or dowry, a female Companion would only require her soon-to-be husband teach her the parts of the Qur'ân he knew.**





Islamic Morals are Practical, not Theoretical. Islam's aim is not to put forward an ordinary moral theory concerning various moral issues or to engage in a moral philosophy detached from everyday life and enter debates just for the sake of satisfying inquiring minds. Much rather, Islam's aim is to respond to the moral needs of human beings by offering practicable remedies and to provide them with an opportunity to become conscious of what personal mistakes they may have and, in time, to set themselves right. Islam desires the transferal of its moral principles to life, in the best and most dependable way possible. Not only does it aim for a morality that is "known" but also for one that is "practiced". Following straight after the first few ayat commanding the Noble Messenger -upon him blessings and peace- to "read" were those that ordered him to prohibit others from evil; and that fact alone deserves a thought.

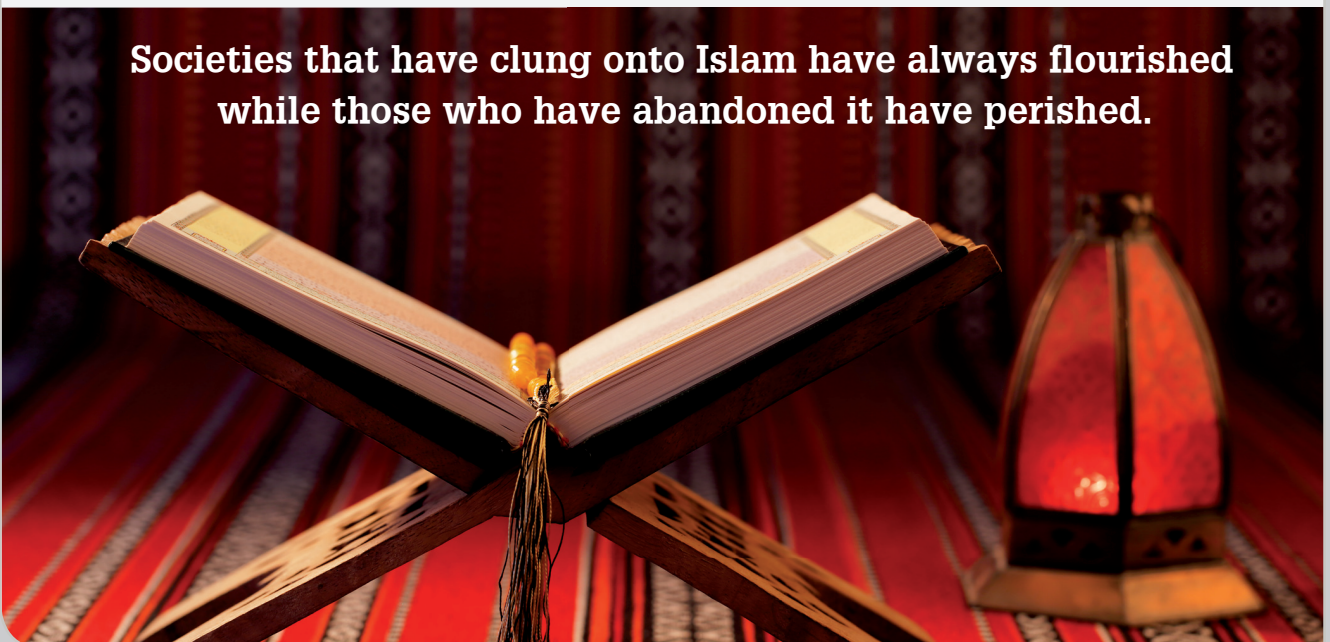
In contrast, the ideas put forth for the sake of establishing social peace and stability by philosophers whose minds never received the training of Divine Revelation, have more often than not never been able to go beyond the books they wrote, consigned the dusty shelves of libraries. As for those that have enjoyed some degree of practice, their lives have been short lived. Besides, these philosophers have been never able to practice what they preached in their own lives, let alone having a lasting influence on others.

Hence, their ideas have always remained theories.

For instance, although Aristotle is known to have laid down certain principles of moral philosophy, because he was distant from Divine Revelation, we have never been able to witness a single person who has believed in his philosophy, practiced it and found happiness through it. Again, even Farabi's most important work *al-Madinatu'l-Fadila*, which contains his ideas of a perfect town and society, have never enjoyed the privilege of being practiced. These ideas were never able to go beyond the lines of the book and have served no practical benefit apart from filling the appetite of hungry bookworms that feed on paper. Simply, they were not ideas preached through practice; nor were they ideas based in Divine Revelation fitting with the Will of the Almighty. "According to my own opinion", is what philosophers say, whereas prophets say "according to the command of the Almighty."

Briefly said, the Almighty again showed His eternal might by revealing to an unlettered Prophet the greatest knowledge of morality more than sufficient for the well-being and benefit of entire humankind. By allowing the Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- to put this great moral depth into practice through his quintessential character, the Almighty has furthermore shown just what His desired model of a human being is, for all eyes to see.

**Societies that have clung onto Islam have always flourished while those who have abandoned it have perished.**



# Sayyidah

MARIYA (r.ah) (I)

Whenever Prophet Muhammad came to her he would talk to her, listen to her, acting as her friend and confidante to help lessen the pain of her homesickness.

## A Life Begun in Egypt

Mariya (r.ah) was born in Upper Egypt, in the village of Hifn, on the eastern bank of the Nile River. The first part of her life was spent in this village with her sister Sirin. Her father was an Egyptian and her mother was an Orthodox Christian.<sup>1</sup>

When she was quite young she and her sister were brought to the palace of Juraij bin Mina al-Kipti, the *Muqawqis* of Egypt.<sup>2</sup> From that time on her life was spent in the palace.

At this point in time, the news that a prophet had emerged on the Arabian Peninsula came to the Egyptian palace. Before long this same Prophet sent a letter to Juraij bin Mina, and to the Byzantine governor of Alexandria via an envoy.<sup>3</sup>

## The Letter of the Prophet of Allah (saw)

Hatib bin Abi Beltaa, who was received into the presence of the *muqawqis*, presented the letter of Prophet Muhammad (saw) to the ruler. The letter was opened with great curiosity. The text of Prophet Muhammad's (saw) letter read as follows:

*"From the servant and Prophet of Allah, Muhammad, to the great Muqawqis of the Coptic*

nation...!

*May greetings be upon those who find guidance and the correct way!*

*I invite you to Islam. Come to Islam and find peace and may Allah reward you twofold!*

*If you do not accept my invitation, but avoid it, all the sins of the Coptic people will be on your head.*

**Say: "O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back, say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)."**<sup>4</sup>

After Hatib bin Abi Beltaa had read the letter to the *Mugawqis* the latter said: "You have been sent by one who has wisdom and you are one with wisdom" and asked him to tell him about the Prophet (saw). He asked a number of questions, one of which was: "If he is truly a prophet, then why does he not destroy his enemies with a curse?"

Hatib answered as follows: "Jesus was a prophet, but he suffered great torment and strife because his own tribe did not acknowledge him. Why did he not destroy them with a curse? Our invitation to the Qur'an is like his invitation to the Jews to the Bible."

After this conversation the *mugawqis* said: "I knew that another prophet was to come. But I thought he would come from Damascus. The Copts... they will not listen to me on the matter of obeying the Prophet (saw)!.." He placed the letter from Prophet Muhammad (saw) in an ivory box and gave it to a *jariya* (slave woman).

The *Mugawqis*, who had treated both the envoy and letter of the Prophet (saw) with respect, did not become Muslim in fear that he would lose his throne. Later, he called a scribe and wrote the following answer: "I have read the text of your letter and I understand to what you are inviting me. I knew that another prophet would appear, but I thought that he would come from Damascus. I have honored your envoy. I send as a present to you two *jariya* which are respected among the Egyptian people, robes and a horse. My greetings to you..."

The *Mugawqis* gave the letter to Hatib. Saying that the Egyptians were very devoted to their religion, and he presented the envoy with gifts and food, recommending that he keep what had happened in the palace secret from the other Egyptians.

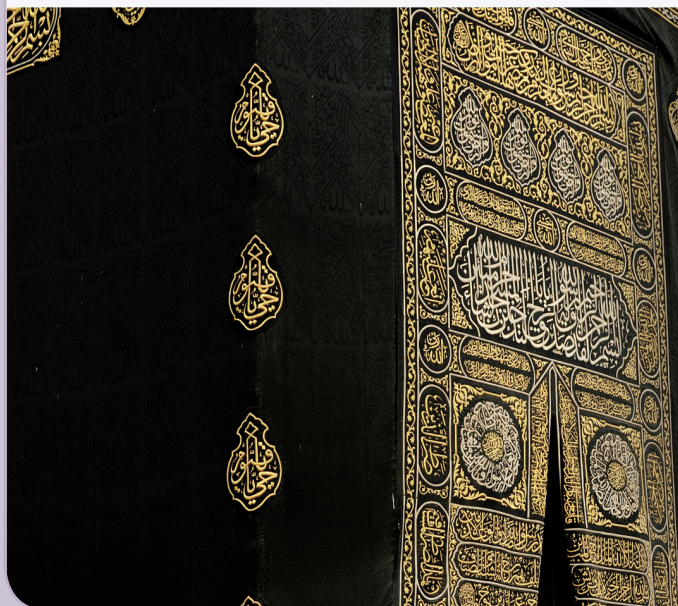
While seeing off Hatib, he gave him Mariya (r.ah) and her sister Sirin to take to Prophet Muhammad (saw), and according to one report there were also two more *jariya*. He also gave him a slave called Mabur,<sup>5</sup> one thousand gold coins, a robe made from the soft textiles of Egypt, a horse and saddle, a mule<sup>6</sup>, the famous honey *banha*, and a variety of incense.<sup>7</sup>

## Islam and the Journey to the Land of Islam

The two sisters, as they were leaving their homeland bid a sorrowful farewell, and with tears in their eyes took a last long look at the Nile and the land of their childhood, until it became lost to view.

In order to make them forget their sorrow,

**The land in which Sayyidah Mariya (r.ah) was now living was the land in which Prophet Abraham, Hagar and Ismail had lived. Her master, Prophet Muhammad (saw) was a descendant of the master of Hagar, Prophet Abraham (as).**







**Sayyidah Mariya was with Prophet Muhammad (saw) for a year. She was very happy in his presence because Prophet Muhammad (saw) did not treat her any differently from his other wives, but rather as if she was a free woman.**

Hatib bin Abi Baltaa began with much enthusiasm to describe the new land they were going to, and the Prophet of Allah (saw). The two young girls were entranced by his descriptions of the religion and its lofty Prophet. Their hearts turned towards Islam and Allah's Prophet (saw). With a small invitation Hatib brought the two young sisters to belief on the road.<sup>8</sup> But the eunuch Mabur still clung to his former belief. However, later, this slave became Muslim in the presence of Prophet Muhammad (saw).

After a long journey this small caravan arrived in Medina, and this was in the seventh year of the Hijrah. Prophet Muhammad (saw) came out to meet them. He was given the letter and gifts from the *Mugawqis*. The Prophet (saw) accepted Mariya (r.ah) and was happy with her, and gave her sister Sirin to the poet Hassan bin Sabit (ra).<sup>9</sup>

After they had settled in Medina, this slave would often be in and out of Sayyidah Mariya's room, as he had of old, carrying wood for her. The hypocrites, not understanding the condition of this slave, started to spread gossip about him. The tricks of the hypocrites were once again foiled when it was understood that he was a eunuch, and there were no rumors left to be spread. News of the young and beautiful *jariya* who came as a present from the land of the Nile and who was staying in the house of Harith bin Numan (ra), which was close to the masjid, reached the wives of Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) did not give much importance to Sayyidah Mariya (r.ah) at first.

However, later when she learned that Prophet Muhammad (saw) went to visit the young Egyptian *jariya* often and spend time there, she tried to find out more about her.

Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) tells us of her feelings at that time as follows: "I was more jealous of Sayyidah Mariya than of any other woman. She was very beautiful, with a white skin and curly hair and she was very attractive."<sup>10</sup>

It was for this reason that Prophet Muhammad (saw) placed Sayyidah Mariya in one of the upper regions of Medina called Aliya.<sup>11</sup> The house in which she was placed was to become known as "Ibrahim's Mashraba" (High Villa), in connection of her being Ummu Ibrahim (mother of Ibrahim).<sup>12</sup>

### **Being with Prophet Muhammad (saw)**

Sayyidah Mariya was with Prophet Muhammad (saw) for a year. She was very happy in his presence because Prophet Muhammad (saw) did not treat her any differently from his other wives, but rather as if she was a free woman.

All her hopes and thoughts, her existence and her ego had melted when fate brought her face to face with this man of such lofty personality. From this aspect, Allah's Prophet (saw) was not only her master and owner, he was her family and her nation. Her only desire was to win his love and approval.

Our Mother Sayyidah Mariya (r.ah) carried the enchantment of the Nile, the fragrance



with which the Nile was surrounded, and the intelligence of her ancestors. Whenever Prophet Muhammad (saw) came to her he would talk to her, listen to her, acting as her friend and confidante to help lessen the pain of her homesickness.

### To Be Like Hagar

Sayyidah Mariya (r.ah) resembled Hagar in her personality and in her fate; indeed, both came from Egypt. Both were presented to a prophet, and it was for this reason Sayyidah Mariya (r.ah) never tired of hearing the story of Hagar, the *jariya* of Prophet Abraham (as). Prophet Muhammad (saw) often told her the story about how Abraham (as) married Hagar, and for her each time was just like the first time.<sup>13</sup>

The land in which Sayyidah Mariya (r.ah) was now living was the land in which Prophet Abraham, Hagar and Ismail had lived. Her master, Prophet Muhammad (saw) was a descendant of the master of Hagar, Prophet Abraham (as).

Would she be able to give Prophet Muhammad (saw) a child? If only!.. This did not seem very likely, or more truthfully, almost impossible. After the death of Sayyidah Khadijah (r.ah), Prophet Muhammad (saw) had married ten women. Some were young and healthy, and some had children from earlier marriages, but not one of these women had borne Prophet Muhammad (saw) a child. And the Prophet (saw) was now nearly 60 years old.

But Sayyidah Mariya (r.ah) was not without hope. After being with the Prophet (saw) for

two years, she suddenly became aware of the signs of pregnancy; however, she thought this was just her imagination, and she kept the situation secret. When the signs became more and more apparent, she told her sister Sirin, who responded that this was not just her imagination, what Sayyidah Mariya (r.ah) was feeling was real.

**Endnotes:** 1) Muhammad Hamidullah, having collected different reports about the lineage of Mariya, says the following: "It is likely that her father was an Iranian who married a Christian Greek woman when Egypt was invaded by the Iranians." 2) *Muqarraqis* was a title like "sultan" or "king" that the rulers of Egypt called themselves. 3) Aynur Uraler, DIA, the article of "Mariye", XXVIII, 63. 4) Surah Âl-i İmrân, 3: 64. 5) Celal Yeniçeri, Ibid., page: 118. 6) This was the famous animal that carried Prophet Muhammad (saw), known as "Duldul". 7) Ibn-i Abdi'l-Berr, el-Istiâb, IV, 397; Ibn-i Hacer, el-Isâbe, IV, 391; DIA, the article of "Mariye". 8) DIA, the article of "Mariye". 9) DIA, the article of "Mariye". 10) Ayşe Abdurrahman, page: 139; narrated by Ziya Kazıcı, Ibid., page: 318. 11) DIA, the article of "Mariye". 12) Ibn-i Sa'd, et-Tabakât, VIII, 212; Ibn-i Hajar, el-Isabe, IV, 391. 13) As we know, Abraham (as) had had no children with Sarah and they were both growing older. Sarah set her slave Hagar free and married her to Abraham (as). From this union Ismail was born and Prophet Muhammad (saw) was a descendant of Ismail. Sarah thought that the light of Muhammad (saw) would emanate from her and she was greatly saddened by the birth of Ismail; she told Abraham to take Hagar to live somewhere else. Abraham (as) took Hagar and her son Ismail, on the order of Allah, to the deserted location which was Mecca. They stayed there in that barren desert; then due to the patience and submission shown by Hagar and Ismail, drinking water (zam zam) flowed out from the middle of the desert and people (the Jurhumi) arrived, with whom they could form a society.

# Quiz For Children



1. Which month of the Hijra calendar is Ramadan?

- a. 1<sup>st</sup>
- b. 5<sup>th</sup>
- c. 9<sup>th</sup>
- d. 12<sup>th</sup>

2. When do Muslims fast during Ramadan?

- a. Eating before sunrise
- b. Eating after Isha
- c. Not to eat anything
- d. Eating after sunset

3. Which of these things should you abstain during the fasting period in Ramadan?

- a. Eating
- b. Drinking
- c. Smoking
- d. All of the above

4. Ramadan begins with...

- a. The sighting of a new moon
- b. Sunrise
- c. Sunset
- d. None of the Above

5. Lailat-ul-Qadr is better than...

- a. 1000 hours
- b. 1000 days
- c. 1000 months
- d. 1000 years

6. What does Laylat-ul-Qadr mean?

- a. Night of Fasting
- b. Night of Praying
- c. Night of Power
- d. Night of Dhikr

7. Which month comes after Ramadan?

- a. Shawwal
- b. Rajab
- c. Muharram
- d. Dhu'l Hijjah

8. Which significant events took place in Ramadan?

- a. Qur'an was revealed
- b. Our Prophet was born
- c. Battle of Uhud
- d. Miraj occurred

9. Nawafil (Optional) prayers in Ramadan become equal to...

- a. Sunnah Prayers
- b. Wajeeb Prayers
- c. Fardh Prayers
- d. Same as Nawafil Prayers

10. Which festival occurs at the end of Ramadan?

- a. Eid Al-Adha
- b. Eid Al-Fitr

**Hey Kids! Maybe you can win a prize!**

The first 25 entries that answers the questions correctly will win. Encircle your answers, fill out the form, and mail to: Wisdom - Quiz, 8508 So. 71st East Ave. Tulsa, OK 74133 USA.

Name: ..... Age: .....

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Parent's Name (for consent purposes only): .....

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