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Lesson 1: Ramadhan

A Month Hosted By Allah

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

“The month of Ramadhan, wherein the Holy Qur’an was sent down to be a guidance to the people, and as clear signs of the Guidance and the Salvation. So let those of you, who are present at the month, fast it; and if any of you be sick, or if he be on a journey, then a number of other days; God desires ease for you, and desires not hardship for you; and that you fulfil the number, and magnify God that He has guided you, and haply you will be thankful.” (Surah Al Baqarah 2: 185).

Ramadhan is a word that comes from the root word "رَمَضَ" which means to burn, but a burning which is not accompanied by smoke and ash. The reason for this name is that in the month of Ramadhan, the sins of mankind are burnt and destroyed.

The month of Ramadhan is the month in which the Holy Qur’an was sent down and is the only month that has been named in the Holy Qur’an. The Night of Qadr (commonly translated to the Night of Power) is also in this month. The Prophet said that “All of the divine books were sent down during the month of Ramadhan, the best of Allah’s months”.¹ On the last Friday in the month of Sha’ban (the month before Ramadhan), a detailed speech was delivered by the Prophet regarding the significance of the month of Ramadhan which is made available to us through some of the commentaries of the Holy Qur’an and through books of narrations. Also in the Sahifa Sajjadia, Imam Sajjad (pbuh) greets this Holy Month with a supplication and farewells it with a heart wrenching supplication.

In Ramadhan, believers are invited as guests to hosted by Allah (SwT) with the following Ayah of the

Qur'an:

{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ}

O believers, prescribed for you is the Fast, even as it was prescribed for those that were before you – haply you will be Godfearing – Surah Al Baqarah 2: 183

And this invitation has the following special characteristics:

1. The host is Allah (swt) and the guests have been personally invited.
2. The reception is made up of the Night of Qadr, the sending of the Holy Qur'an, the landing of the Angels, the answers to supplications, the beneficence of the soul, and to be distanced from the Hell-fire.
3. The time and duration of the reception is the month of Ramadhan, which according to narrations, the first of which is mercy, the middle of which is forgiveness, and the conclusion of which is reward.
4. The way the guests are greeted in the Night of Power is one guarantees the provisions for guests for the one year and the earth is decorated with the descending of the Angels to it.
5. The food served in this month is nutrition for the soul which is needed for spiritual growth, not food for the body. The benefit of the food of this month, which are the Ayahs of the Holy Qur'an for which the recitation of one Ayah in the month of Ramadhan, is equivalent to the recitation of the entire Holy Qur'an during other months.

This invitation cannot be compared to or be likened to any worldly invitation; the All Knowledgeable, Needless, Creator, Everlasting, Beloved, Exalted, is the host for mankind who are ignorant, poor, perishable, created, servile and needy.

In Wasa'il Al Shia², in detailed narrations of the characteristics of a fasting person, we read "A fasting person must avoid lying, sin, dispute, jealousy, back biting, opposing the truth, swearing, blaming, anger, sarcasm, oppression, abusing people, neglect, being social with those who sin, slander and gossip, eating non-permissible things, while paying special attention with regards to prayers, patience, truthfulness and being in constant remembrance of the Day of Resurrection".

Conditions of entry in to the reception is not only the withstanding of hunger. We read in narrations "anyone who does not obey the Divine Guide in relation to personal and family matters, behaves badly and without mercy with their spouse, and/or refuses legitimate means of obtaining their needs or wants, and/or if the parents are not happy with them, the fasting of that person is not accepted nor have the conditions of being a guest been fulfilled.

The value of Ramadhan, is with the descending of the Holy Qur'an. The worth of the human can also

come with some penetration of the Holy Qur'an inside them.

The Sermon of Sha'ban

Imam Ali (pbuh) narrates that the Prophet (pbuh), on the last Friday of Sha'ban³, gave a speech in which after he Praised Allah (swt), he stated⁴:

"O People !

"Indeed ahead of you is the blessed month of Allah. A month of blessing, mercy and forgiveness. A month which with Allah is the best of months. Its days, the best of days, its nights, the best of nights, and its hours, the best of hours. It is the month which invites you to be the guests of Allah and invites you to be one of those near to Him. Each breath you take glorifies him; your sleep is worship, your deeds are accepted and your supplications are answered.

So, ask Allah, your Lord; to give you a sound body and an enlightened heart so you may be able to fast and recite his book, for only he is unhappy who is devoid of Allah's forgiveness during this great month. Remember the hunger and thirst of the day of Qiyamah (Judgement) with your hunger and thirst; give alms to the needy and poor, honor your old, show kindness to the young ones, maintain relations with your blood relations; guard your tongues, close your eyes to that which is not permissible for your sight, close your ears to that which is forbidden to hear, show compassion to the orphans of people so compassion may be shown to your orphans.

Repent to Allah for your sins and raise your hands in dua during these times, for they are the best of times and Allah looks towards his creatures with kindness, replying to them during the hours and granting their needs if he is asked...

"O People! Indeed your souls are dependent on your deeds, free it with Istighfar (repentance) lighten its loads by long prostrations; and know that Allah swears by his might: That there is no punishment for the one who prays and prostrates and he shall have no fear of the fire on the day when man stands before the Lord of the worlds.

"O People! One who gives Iftaar to a fasting person during this month will be like one who has freed someone and his past sins will be forgiven.

Some of the people who were there then asked the Prophet (s): "Not all of us are able to invite those who are fasting?"

The Prophet (s) replied: "Allah gives this reward even if the Iftaar (meal) is a drink of water."

"One who has good morals (Akhlaq) during this month will be able to pass the 'Siraat'...on the day that feet will slip...

“One who covers the faults of others will benefit in that Allah will curb His anger on the day of Judgement...

“As for one who honors an orphan; Allah will honor him on the day of judgement,

“And for the one who spreads his kindness, Allah will spread His mercy over him on the day of Judgement.

“As for the one who cuts the ties of relation; Allah will cut His mercy from him...

“Who so ever performs a recommended prayer in this month Allah will keep the fire of Hell away from him...

“Whoever performs an obligatory prayer Allah will reward him with seventy prayers [worth] in this month.

“And who so ever prays a lot during this month will have his load lightened on the day of measure.

“He who recites one verse of the Holy Qur’an will be given the rewards of reciting the whole Holy Qur’an during other months.

“O People! Indeed during this month the doors of heaven are open, therefore ask Allah not to close them for you; The doors of hell are closed, so ask Allah to keep them closed for you. During this month Shaytan (Satan) is imprisoned so ask your Lord not to let him have power over you.”

Imam Ali then asked the Prophet (pbuh) *what the best deed is for this Holy Month?* To which the Prophet replied – *Oh Abu Al-Hassan, the best deed is Taqwa (the love of and fear from Allah (swt) and abstaining from that which has been forbidden by Him. After his response, the Prophet started crying, and when Imam Ali (pbuh) asked why... the Prophet (pbuh) replied: Oh Ali, I can see what will happen to you during this Holy Month, while you pray, the most wretched will strike you on the head and your beard will be coloured by the blood of your head. Imam Ali (pbuh) asked if his religion at that point will be protected?*

أُفِي سَلَامَةٍ مِنْ دِينِي؟

The Prophet (pbuh) replied affirmatively, adding:

“Oh Ali, whoever kills you will have killed me, and whoever angers you will have angered me, and whoever becomes your enemy will have become my enemy. That’s because you are from me, your soul is from my soul and your presence is from my presence”

Of course, we must monitor ourselves to be sure to supplicate, worship in an appropriate manner and without causing a racket, nor be bad mannered towards family and friends or be wasteful or extravagant,

unjust as guests and during the breakfast (after a long day fast), so that not only will we reap no rewards from our fast but we will have committed a heavier sin.

[1.](#) (Al Burhan – البرهان في تفسير القرآن)

[2.](#) (Wasa'il Al Shia وسائل الشيعة)

[3.](#) The lunar month just before the Holy Month of Ramadhan.

[4.](#) Translation compliments of Al-Islam.org, Supplications for the Month of Ramadhan. Available from <http://www.al-islam.org/supplications-month-ramadhan/sermon-given-prophe...> [1], date cited 01/02/16.

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