



The Approach of Ramadaan

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Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Ramadaan has come to you - a blessed month. Allaah has made obligatory upon you its fasting. In it, the gates of heaven are open, the gates of the Hellfire are closed and the evil devils are chained. To Allaah belongs a night in it, which is better than a thousand months. Whosoever is prevented from its good, then he has been deprived."²

The hadeeth is a glad tidings to the righteous servants of Allaah, of the coming of the blessed month of Ramadaan. The Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) informed his companions of its coming and it was not just a simple relaying of news. Rather, his intent was to give them the glad tidings of a magnificent time of the year, so that the righteous people who are quick to do deeds can give it its due estimate. This is because the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) explained in it (the hadeeth) what Allaah has prepared for His servants from the ways towards gaining forgiveness and His contentment and they are many ways. So whosoever has forgiveness escape from him during the month of Ramadaan, then he has been deprived with the utmost deprivation.

From the great favors and bounties that Allaah has bestowed upon His servants is that He has prepared for them meritorious occasions so that they may be of profit for those who obey Him and a race for those who rush to compete (for good deeds). These meritorious occasions are times for fulfilling hopes by exerting in obedience and uplifting flaws and deficiencies by self-rectification and repentance. There is not a single occasion from these virtuous times, except that Allaah has assigned in it works of obedience, by which one may draw close to Him. And Allaah possesses the most beautiful things as gifts, which He bestows upon whomsoever He wills by His Grace and Mercy.

So the one who achieves true happiness is he who takes advantage of these virtuous months, days and hours and draws closer to His Guardian in them, by doing what is prescribed in them from the acts of obedience.

¹ The following is taken from *Ahaadeethus-Siyaam: Ahkaam wa Aadaab* (pg. 13-15).

² This hadeeth is reported by Ahmad and An-Nasaa'ee. See Ahmad Shaakir's checking of the Musnad (no. 7148) and Saheeh At-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb of Al-Albaanee (1490) as well as Tamaam-ul-Mannah (395)

Thus, perhaps he will be showered with one of the many blessings of those occasions and be helped by it, with an assistance that saves him from the Fire and what it contains, such as its blazing heat.³

Being able to reach Ramadaan is a magnificent bounty in itself, bestowed upon the one who reaches it and rises to its occasion, by standing in prayer during its night and fasting during its day. In it, he returns to his Protector ~ from disobeying Him to obeying Him, from neglecting Him to remembering Him, from remaining distant from Him to turning towards Him in submissive repentance.

A Muslim must be conscious of this bounty and acknowledge its magnitude. For indeed, many people are prevented from fasting, either because they die before they reach it or because they are not capable of observing it or because they oppose and turn away from it. Thus, the one who fasts must give praise to his Lord for this bounty and should welcome this month with the joy and delight that a magnificent time of the year out of all the occasions for performing obedience is welcomed. He should exert himself deeply in doing good deeds. And he should invoke Allaah to grant him fasting and standing in night prayer and that He provide him with seriousness, enthusiasm, strength and energy in that month. And that He awaken him from heedless oversleeping so that he may take advantage of these virtuous times of good.

It is unfortunate to find that many people do not know the value of this virtuous occasion, nor do they consider it to be sacred. So the month of Ramadaan no longer becomes a significant time for obedience, worship, reciting the Qur'aan, giving in charity and making remembrance of Allaah. Rather, to some people it becomes a significant time for them to diversify their foods and drinks and to prepare different types of meals before the month begins. Some other people do not know Ramadaan except as a month of sleeplessness and constant recurring gatherings, while sleeping by day. This is to the point that some among them sleep past the time of the obligatory prayers, thus not praying them in congregation or in their proper times. Other people do not know Ramadaan except as a significant time for conducting worldly affairs, not as a significant time for conducting affairs for the Hereafter. Thus, they work busily in it, buying and selling, and they stay in the market areas, consequently abandoning the masjids. And when they pray with the people, they do so in such a hurried manner. This is because they find their pleasure in the market places. This is the extent that the notions and views (of Ramadaan) have been changed.

Some of the Salaf have used to say: "Indeed Allaah, the Most High, has made the month of Ramadaan as a competition for His creatures, in which they may race with one another to His pleasure, by obeying Him. Thus, one group comes first and so they prosper and another group comes last and so they fail."⁴

³ These are the words of Ibn Rajab in *Lataa'if-ul-Ma'aarif*: pg. 8

⁴ *Lataa'if-ul-Ma'aarif* of Ibn Rajab: page 246

Also, the individual does not know if this is perhaps the last Ramadaan he will ever see in his life, if he completes it. How many men, women and children have fasted with us the past year, and yet now they lie buried in the depths of the earth, depending on their good deeds. And they expected to fast many more Ramadaans. Likewise, we too shall all follow their path. Therefore, it is upon the Muslim to rejoice at this magnificent occasion for obedience. And he should not renounce it, but instead busy himself with what will benefit him and what will cause its effect to remain. For what else is it, except numbered days, which are fasted in succession and which finish rapidly.

May Allaah make us, as well as you, from among those who are foremost in attaining good deeds.