12468 - The Muslim in Ramadan

the question

What should we say to the Muslims on the occasion of the beginning of Ramadan?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Sawm (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Sawm (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allah [i.e. to say Takbeer (Allahu Akbar: Allah is the Most Great)] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.”

[al-Baqarah 2:185]

This blessed month is a great opportunity for goodness, barakah (blessing), worship and obedience towards Allah.

It is a great month, a noble season, a month in which hasanaat (rewards for good deeds) are multiplied and in which committing sayi’aat (bad deeds) is more serious than at other times. The gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are shut, and the sinners’ repentance to Allah is accepted.

So give thanks to Him for the season of goodness and blessing that He has bestowed upon you,

and for the means of bounty and various kinds of great blessings for which He has singled you out. Make the most of this blessed time by filling it with acts of worship and forsaking haraam things, so that you may attain a good life in this world and happiness after death.

For the sincere believer, every month is an occasion for worship and his whole life is spent in obeying Allah, but in the month of Ramadan he has even more motives to do good and his heart is even more focused on worship, and he turns even more to his Lord. By His grace, our generous Lord bestows His bounty upon the fasting believers and multiplies the reward for them on this blessed occasion, so He gives abundantly and rewards generously for righteous deeds.

Time passes quickly

Days pass so quickly, as if they were mere moments. We welcomed Ramadan, then we bade it farewell, and only a short period of time passed and we are welcoming Ramadan again. So we should hasten to do good deeds in this month and strive to fill it with that which Allah is pleased with and with that which will help us on the Day when we meet Him.

How can we prepare for Ramadan?

We can prepare for Ramadan by taking stock of ourselves and recognizing our shortcomings in living up to the Shahaadatayn, or our shortcoming in fulfilling our duties, or our shortcomings in not keeping away from the desires and doubts that we may have fallen into…

We should set ourselves straight so that in Ramadan we will have a higher degree of faith. For faith increases and decreases. It increases through obedience to Allah and it decreases through disobedience and sin. The first act of obedience that a person should achieve is that of being a true slave of Allah and believing that there is none that is rightfully worshipped except Allah, so he directs all kinds of worship to Allah and does not associate anyone else in worship with Him. Each of us should realize that whatever has befallen him could not have missed him, and whatever missed him could not have befallen him, and that everything happens by the will and decree of Allah.

We should avoid everything that could undermine our commitment to the Shahaadatayn. This means keeping away from bid’ah (innovations) and things that have been introduced into the religion. We should also follow the principle of al-walaa’ wa’l-bara’ (loyalty and friendship vs. disavowal and enmity), by taking the believers as our friends and by regarding the kaafirs and hypocrites as enemies, and we should rejoice when the Muslims gain a victory over their enemies. We should follow the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his companions and adhere to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the way of the Rightly-Guided Khulafa’ who came after him. We should love the Sunnah and love those who adhere to it and defend it, in whatever country they are and whatever colour or nationality they are.

After that we should take stock of ourselves and recognize our shortcomings in doing acts of worship such as praying in congregation, remembering Allah (dhikr), paying attention to the rights of neighbours, relatives and the Muslims, spreading the greeting of salam, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, urging one another to follow the truth and be patient and steadfast in doing so, being patient in avoiding evil actions and in doing good deeds, and accepting the decree of Allah with patience.

Then we should take stock of ourselves and our sins and our following whims and desires. We should stop ourselves from persisting in that, whether the sin is great or small, whether it is a sin of the eye, by looking at that which Allah has forbidden; or by listening to music; or by walking to things of which Allah does not approve; or by using one's hands to srike in a manner with which Allah is not pleased; or by consuming things that Allah has forbidden such as riba (usury) and bribes, or any other means of consuming people’s wealth unlawfully.

We should never forget that Allah stretches forth His hand during the day to accept the repentance of those who sinned at night, and He stretches forth His hand at night to accept the repentance of those who sinned during the day. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for Al-Muttaqoon (the pious).

Those who spend (in Allah's Cause) in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men; verily, Allah loves Al-Muhsinoon (the good-doers).

And those who, when they have committed Faahishah (illegal sexual intercourse) or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins; — and none can forgive sins but Allah — and do not persist in what (wrong) they have done, while they know.

For such, the reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath (Paradise), wherein they shall abide forever. How excellent is this reward for the doers (who do righteous deeds according to Allah's Orders)"

[Aal 'Imraan 3:133-136]

"Say: "O 'Ibaadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"

[al-Zumar 39:53]

"And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"

[al-Nisa' 4:110]

By taking stock, repenting and seeking forgiveness, this is how we should welcome Ramadan. "The smart man is the one who takes stock of himself and strives to do that which will benefit him after death, and the helpless one is the one who follows his own whims and desires and engages in wishful thinking, (assuming that Allah will forgive him regardless of what he does and that he does not need to strive to good deeds)."

The month of Ramadan is the month of great gains and profits. The smart trader is the one who makes the most of special occasions to increase his profits. So make the most of this month by doing lots of acts of worship, praying a great deal, reading Quran, forgiving people, being kind to

others and giving charity to the poor.

In the month of Ramadan the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are shut. The devils are put in chains and a caller cries out each night, O seeker of good, proceed, O seeker of evil, desist.

So, O slaves of Allah, be among the people of good, following the path of your righteous forebears who were guided by the Sunnah of your Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), so that we may end Ramadan with our sins forgiven and our righteous deeds accepted.

We should note that the month of Ramadan is the best of months.

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

Another of example of that – i.e., of the differentiation between the things that Allah has created – is the fact that the month of Ramadan is superior to all other months, and the last ten nights are superior to the other nights."

Zaad al-Ma'aad, 1/56

This month is superior to others in four things:

1 – In it there is the best night of the year, which is Laylat al-Qadr. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Verily, We have sent it (this Quran) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree).

And what will make you know what the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is?

The Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e. 83 years and 4 months).

Therein descend the angels and the Rooh [Jibreel (Gabriel)] by Allah's Permission with all Decrees,

(All that night), there is peace (and goodness from Allah to His believing slaves) until the

appearance of dawn”

[al-Qadar 97:1-5]

So worship on this night is better than worshipping for a thousand months.

2 – In this month was revealed the best of Books to the best of the Prophets (peace be upon them). Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)”

[al-Baqarah 2:185]

“We sent it (this Quran) down on a blessed night [(i.e. the Night of Al-Qadr) in the month of Ramadan — the 9th month of the Islamic calendar]. Verily, We are ever warning [mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of Lordship and in Our Oneness of worship].

Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments.

As a Command (or this Quran or the Decree of every matter) from Us. Verily, We are ever sending (the Messengers)”

[al-Dukhaan 44:3-5]

It was narrated by Ahmad and by al-Tabaraani in al-Mu’jam al-Kabeer that Waathilah ibn al-Asqa’ (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The Scriptures of Ibraaheem were sent down on the first of the month of Ramadan. The Tawraat was sent down on the sixth of Ramadan. The Injeel was sent down on the thirteenth of Ramadan. The Zaboor was sent down on the eighteenth of Ramadan, and the Quran was sent down on the twenty-fourth of Ramadan.

Classed as hasan by al-Albani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, 1575.

3 – In this month the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are chained up.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “When Ramadan comes, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains.” (Agreed upon).

Al-Nasaa’i narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “When Ramadan comes, the gates of mercy are opened and the gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are put in chains.”

Classed as saheeh by al-Albani in Saheeh al-Jaami’, 471.

Al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Maajah and Ibn Khuzaymah narrated in one report: “When the first night of the month of Ramadan comes, the devils and rebellious jinn are chained up and the gates of Hell are closed, and not one gate of it is opened. The gates of Paradise are opened and not one gate of it is closed. And a caller cries out: ‘O seeker of good, proceed; O seeker of evil, desist. And Allah has those whom He redeems from the Fire, and that happens every night.”

Classed as hasan by al-Albani in Saheeh al-Jaami’, 759.

If it is asked, how come we see many evil actions and sins committed in Ramadan, for if the devils are chained up that would not happen?

The answer is that evil actions become less for those who observe the conditions and etiquette of fasting;

or that the ones who are chained up are some of the devils – namely the rebellious ones – not all of them;

or that what is meant is that evil is reduced in Ramadan, which is a proven fact. If evil happens at this time, it is still less than at other times. Even if all of them (the devils) are chained up, that does not necessarily mean that no evil or sin will happen, because there are other causes of that

besides the devils, such as evil souls, bad habits and the devils among mankind. Al-Fath, 4/145

4 – There are many kinds of worship in Ramadan, some of which are not done at other times, such as fasting, praying qiyaam, feeding the poor, i’tikaaf, sadaqah, and reading Quran.

I ask Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty, to help us all to do that and to help us to fast and pray qiyaam, and to do acts of worship and to avoid doing evil. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.