

Get ready for Ramadan

In the name of Allah most gracious most merciful.

Thanks be to Allah, the Merciful, the Almighty, the One the Only. He knows all what is in heavens and what is in earth. He knows what we say and He knows what is in our minds.

Allah has favoured this nation with this month every year. Ramadan approaches like a graceful visitor. Some people become good hosts and honor the month of Ramadan. While, some people, Ramadan departs with the worst effects and worst memories.

Good tidings to this for which Ramadan shall testify positively, and Good tidings to this for which the Koran will testify positively. On the day of resurrection and the day of reckoning, the fasting and the Koran will testify for the slave. Fasting shall say: "O' Lord, I kept him off his food and his lust, allow me to mediate and put in a good word for him". And the Koran shall say: "I came between him and his sleep at night. Allow me to mediate for him". And their mediation is accepted.

Ramadan is a season of goodness and riches; provided by Allah to mankind. It is the season for the devout, and a shop or a market for the righteous. Each commodity in any market has its season. Those business people keep a watch for that season. During such a season they increase their business activities, and increase their efforts many fold in order to maximize their profit. They put in so much effort in order that they may make profit. But like in any business they may make profit or may not. And if they do make profit; they may benefit from it and they may not. And if they benefit from such profit for one day, they may not be round for long to keep on benefiting from it. Indeed they may die and leave it behind.

This worldly life has it own business people, and the next life has its business people. Business men and women of this worldly life keep a watch

on its business seasons in order to maximize their profits. Business people of the next life also keep a watch for the its seasons in order to maximize their profits too. But, their profit is different; it is in the form of forgiveness and mercies from their Lord and paradise.

Ramadan comes every year as an opportunity to the Muslim to increase the goodness and reduce sins. Doors to goodness are open, just like the doors to paradise, while doors to hellfire are closed and Satans are chained or cuffed. This is an indication to the increased numbers of doors and paths leading to goodness, and the reduced and limited tracks for evil.

What a happy ending for those who take advantage of this opportunity. The messenger (PPBU) said: {When Ramadan approaches, the doors to paradise are opened, and the doors to hell are closed, and Satans are cuffed and chained. A caller calls: "You who seek goodness go ahead, and you who seek evil confine yourself."}. This reminds those who have been forgetful about Allah for the past eleven months. Put your hand in the hand of Allah. Approach Allah with good fasting, good night prayers and plenty of deed of obedience.

Good fasting means that your fasting is not mere fasting of the stomach and lust; while your tongue is not fasting, your eyes are not fasting; your ears and all your other senses are not fasting.

The messenger (PPBU) said: {This who does not give up speaking falsely (or lying) and acting (or living) by it; as far as Allah is concerned; there is no point for him/her in giving up the food and drink}. And he also said: {Fasting is a shield and protection. When one of you fast, let them not argue or do evil. And if someone curses him; or fight him; let him say: "I'm fasting"}. Meaning let this who is fasting not respond to evil with evil; rather he/she should respond to evil with good. Let him remember that he is in the process of an act of worship which should not be broken or bruised. Let him say with his heart and his tongue to himself and others that he is fasting. Some ignorant Muslims hurt and abuse others verbally and then

say: "excuse me; I am fasting!!" As if Allah through fasting has given permission to destroy the morals and behaviour of people. A fasting Muslim ought to control himself, control his tongue, control his ears and eyes and all his/her senses. A many a person gains nothing from his fasting except hunger and thirst. Yes, there are those who suffer the hunger and thirst in fasting; but do not give fasting what it deserves. Indeed, many scholars go as far as saying that backbiting, tattling, lying and other evil acts spoil the fasting. And any who does one of those acts during fasting will need to fast another day as a replacement. Some other scholars said those acts do not spoil fasting but it takes away its rewards. And even this is not a simple matter. Imagine fasting; feeling the hunger the thirst; your mouth going dry; for a full day; and finally you find no reward for it with Allah. You come out empty handed. Watch yourself and control what you do and say; purify your self this month.

Fasting is an opportunity to elevate your self to the horizon of angels. The messenger (PPBU) said: {Whoever goes through Ramadan (or do nightly prayers in Ramadan) in faith and expectations; all his previous sins are forgiven}. And he also said: {the five daily prayers; and the Friday to Friday; and Ramadan to Ramadan are cleansers of sins which happens between one and the next; as long as major sins are avoided}.

Dear brothers let us prepare for the night prayers as we prepare for fasting. Encourage your spouse to attend *taraweeh* prayers at the mosque in order to share the reward.

Well done to this who spends the night in prayers; kneeling and prostrating; contemplating the life after; and in expectation of Allah's mercy; tearful eyes and revering heart, and a tongue busy praising Allah and reciting His words. Allah says: {No soul knows what Allah Has hidden for them to their eyes contentment; as a reward for what they used to do}. You who seek good come on up, and you who seek evil refrain. And Allah each and every night in Ramadan proclaims some Muslims to be set free from ever being touched by Hellfire. Be one of those.

One of the successful paths during Ramadan is the night of *Qadr*. And what do you know about the night of *Qadr*. The night of *Qadr* is better than a thousand months. The messenger (PPBU) said: {Whoever stays up the night of *Qadr* in faith and expectations, then all his/her previous sins are forgiven}.

Another path is the reciting of Koran. Try to recite the Koran a plenty during this month. Try to get the lessons in its verses. Listen to it being recited, follow its guidance. The messenger used to recite the complete Koran during the month of Ramadan. Gabriel used to revise the Koran with the messenger (PPBU) once every Ramadan. The year the messenger (PPBU) died; Gabriel revised it twice in that Ramadan.

Dear Muslims, one of the most important characteristics of Ramadan is to adopt perfection in words and deed. Generosity is one of the characteristics the messenger (PPBU) used to have, and he used to be most generous during the month of Ramadan. Slaves of Allah: Be good and be perfect. Allah likes those who are good and who are seeking perfection in obedience of Allah. Be generous by giving in donation part of what you value. And avoid stinginess; skimpiness and greed and do not listen to Satan.

Another deed of Ramadan is E-tikaf or taking seclusion in a mosque for the last ten days of Ramada; as the messenger (PPBU) used to do. E-tikaf is for an individual to limit himself to the boundaries of the mosque in obedience of Allah, and seeking the life after.

Allah says: {You faithful, fasting has been written upon you as it was written upon those before you.}

Dear Muslims, one of the most direct paths leading to Allah during this month of Ramadan and right through the Muslim's life is dua or supplication. By asking Allah of your needs. Indeed {supplication is a

worship}. Allah says: {call me (or make supplications to me) I will answer. Those who are proud to worship me; they shall be entered into hell with disgrace}. The messenger (PPBU) said: {Who does not ask Allah, Allah will be annoyed with.} Dear Muslims, do aplenty of asking to Allah, in sick and in health; in rich and in poor. Ask for the best in this life and next. Allah says: {Dear God, give us in this life goodness, and the next life goodness, and protect us from the torment of fire}

Dear Muslim, seek the points or times of sure answer. One who is fasting has an answered prayer. Most likely it is at the time when he or she break their fasting. And every night of Ramadan has an hour during which if a Muslim asks for anything, he or she will be answered by Allah. Allah says: {and if my slaves ask you about me; let them know that I am close by; I answer the call of a caller if he/she call me. Let them respond to Me; and believe in Me so they may be religiously true}. Pray and ask Allah with succumbed, broken and insistent hearts. Ask Allah for anything and everything. Ask Him for the little and great things. For nothing or nobody can stop what He gives; and nothing or nobody can give what He withholds.

God, make it easy for us and make us avoid the hardships,

God, make us in this month amongst those who receive your acceptance.

God, bring us out of this month being forgiven.

God, make us lucky with mercies, forgiveness and set free from fire.

God, help us to fast its day (days of Ramadan) in faith and expectation, and stay up in prayers its nights also in faith and expectation.

God, make our day be better than our yesterday, and our tomorrow be better than today. And make our end be good in all matter. And guard us from shame in this life and from torment in the next.

God, make the word of Islam to be the upper word, and the word of the enemies be the lower.

God, make us victorious over your enemies; the enemies of Islam.

God, hold back off us their cheats and conspiracies; and take them as an able noble.

{Our Lord, forgive our sins, and forgive our excessiveness in our matters,

and hold fasten our feet, and make us victorious over the infidel}.

{Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers in faith ahead of us. And let no enmity to those who entered into faith. Our Lord thy are the clement, kind and merciful}

God, make us and our offspring be of those who do prayers. Lord, answer our prayers.

God, forgive us and our parents; and forgive all the faithful on the day of Judgment.

Slaves of Allah, Allah says: {Allah and His angels pray for the messenger; All you believers; pray for him and greet him in peace and submission}. Dear God give prayers, peace and blessings for your slave and messenger Muhammad, and his family, companions and those who followed him.

Dear Allah, help us to achieve perfection in our obedience and our deeds. Guide us to what leads to your acceptance and contentment in words and deeds. Amen.