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The Uniqueness of Ramadan

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By Bachar Bakour

We live today in the era of digital distractions and social media addiction as well as the pursuit of things that have to do with matter and pleasure. In the middle of this hectic life, acts of worship are often squeezed into brief moments. And this does not provide us with a complete transformative spiritual experience.

Welcome Ramadan!

Ramadan is a the turning point in our life, a break free from the deceptions of this alluring world, a spiritual journey that defines our direction in life

Islam makes certain people, times and places especially sacred.

Why Ramadan is a unique month

1-The month of the Qur'an. The first revelation took place in Ramadan. Allah says, "It was in the month of Ramadan that the Qur'an was revealed: a guidance for mankind and a self- evident proof of that guidance and a standard to distinguish right from wrong" (The Qur'an, 2: 185). The Qur'an a monumental event that has changed the whole world. It is the final unaltered revelation from Allah, the book of guidance to all humanity, the constitution of Muslims, an insight about human nature and behaviour, a guideline on how morally you should live, etc.

Let us increase out recitation of the Qur'an during this blessed month.

2-Ramadan is an opportunity to reinforce our moral values.

Islam came to complete and perfect moral values. Our faith is not complete without morality. The Prophet defined a Muslim on a moral basis. He describes the Muslim as the one who does not hurt others by sayings or actions. Also, he said that believers who show the most perfect faith are those who have the best behaviour, and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives.

So, how does Ramadan promote values? The Qur'an states the objective of fasting: "Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing."

(The Qur'an, 2: 183). Ramadan is the best time to control your feelings and desires. A fasting person is required to control himself by refraining from uttering vulgar and offensive words and expression. And we someone swears at him or calls him names, he just says, "I am fasting". Fasting tests our patience and ability to be kind even through discomfort. Further, when you are fasting you are having the same experience with poor or those who sleep with empty stomachThis is an incentive for you to

help others. Ramadan is an opportunity for promoting social solidarity, for creating a smile on a face of the wretched, miserable people.

The gates of Paradise are opened wide, and those of Hell are closed. The Prophet says, "When Ramadan comes, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained up." This refers to the fact that Ramadan is a conducive atmosphere for us to increase our morality, as a big source of evil in this world is precluded from doing their business.

3-Observing Ramadan out of sincerity eliminates our past sins. "Whoever fasts Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward (from Allah), his previous sins will be forgiven." (Hadith)

4- Observing Qiyam in Ramadan eliminates our past sins as well. "Whoever spends the nights of Ramadan in prayer out of faith and in the hope of reward (from Allah), his previous sins will be forgiven." (Hadith).

5- 'Umrah Performed in Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj
'Umrah in Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj with me." (Hadith).

6- Every night Allah has people whom He delivers from Hell.

10- Laylatul-Qadr. Allah says, "Indeed, We revealed [the Qur'an] during the Night of Decree. And what can make you know what is the Night of Decree? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter. Peace is until the emergence of dawn". (The Qur'an, 97:1-5) This very special night is the night of destiny or decree. It is the night in which the fate of each one of us is decided for the coming year (our provision, life span, and other matters). And this kind of decree is subject to change. It is contingent decree (qada' mu'allaq) which Allah gives to angels. And this is different from the irrevocable decree (qada' mubram) which is with Allah.

So,

Laylatul-Qadr is a great opportunity for us to pray for getting of our best dreams and wishes. What we need to do during this night is to keep praying and invoking our Lord to make us among His happy servants, among those whom He would deliver from Hell, among those whom He would grant more provision and

sustenance, etc.. We can change our destiny for the better in this special night.

Some scholars defined the meaning of Laylatul-Qadr as 'the night of power,' indicating the greatness of the honour and might of the night, as our deeds in during this night are far more powerful than they would be on any other night. Our acts of worship are multiplied greatly during this night.

If someone prays Isha and Fajr in congregation on that night is enough to fill its scales. The Prophet said: "Whoever attends Isha prayer in congregation, then he has the reward as if he had stood half of the night. And whoever prays Isha and Fajr in congregation, then he has the reward as if he had spent the entire night standing in prayer."

11-Cling to Du'a' in Ramadan. "If My servants ask you about Me, well, I am near; I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls to Me" (The Qur'an, 2:186). One of the greatest acts of devotion that we can perform in the blessed month of Ramadan is to engage in Du'a'. "Supplication is (the essence) of worship." (Hadith). Keep praying to Allah, our Lord, Who is always near to respond. People spend all day at the doors of kings, while at night the king of kings calls upon us. The Prophet said, "God shall answer the prayer (of any Muslim anywhere on earth, or He will protect him against contrasting harm, as long as he does not ask for something evil or for the break-up of kinship relations." He is also reported as saying: "Prayers shall be answered unless one asks for something evil or the break-up of kinship relations, and as long as one does not become impatient." When the Prophet was asked to explain how one becomes impatient, he said: "One says, 'I have prayed many times but I have had no response,' then gives up hope and abandons praying altogether."

A fasting person has the best chance of his prayers being answered, as our beloved Prophet told us: "On breaking the fast, the prayer of a fasting person is never turned down."

May Allah accept our fasting, and prayer and deliver us from Fire

Amen. ***

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