

Perhaps It May be Our Last Ramadan!

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The month of Ramadan is a divine spring when rain of blessings from Allah provides a new spirit upon His believers, who eagerly wait for its advent. It is the month of purification and salvation, but there are some who even in the month of Ramadan are largely involved in activities which are condemned by the Shariah and its Granter, such as immoral behavior, unjust actions, unfair dealings etc. These sins become their cause of destruction of good deeds and destroy piety. Many people spend money in the name of charity in Ramadan in public platform for self glorification, which destroy its religious significance. Hadith Literature provides us guidance that charity is offered in the same manner as you would receive from others i.e.: in an honorable mode. Ramadan gives us lessons of tolerance and patience, so we can act on it throughout the year with sympathy for the less fortunate class.

People approach Ramadan in different ways. Its perception differs from people to people. Some people view Ramadan as a period of expressing their undying love for the Beloved. For them, Ramadan is a valuable, precious, and rare occasion. They spend all their time doing good, convinced that the reward of each act is multiplied. Patience, sympathy, and generosity beautifies the demeanor. They guard their tongues and remain preoccupied in recitation of Qur'an and Dua, seeking forgiveness, begging for Jannah, and seeking protection from Jahannam. There are others who regard Ramadan as a painstaking task. It is a painful practice and a torturous month for these so called moderates. They reluctantly keep Sawm and offer Sal'aat. Their concept of Siy'am is limited to physical abstention of food, drink, and marital relationship with wife. They spend their time in chitchat, watching TV, and wasting their nights in markets and restaurants. They are not ever inclined towards Khair'at, nor are they careful of their Ibadah. Their goal in Ramadan is to prepare for Eid. The following Hadith suitably describes their spiritless actions:

"Many are the ones who keep Sawm attaining nothing by such except hunger, and many perform Sal'at by night attaining nothing by it except the discomfort of staying awake."

There is yet a third group who is hardly ever moved by Ramadan. They never believe in Ibadah and remain busy in their worldly activities. They are less concerned with religion, and nor have the will or the time to change their daily routines, as per injunctions of the Shariah. The following Hadith should serve as a harsh warning to them:

"Jibrael appeared before me and said: "Woe to him who found the blessed month of Ramadan and let it passes by without gaining forgiveness". Upon that I said: Aamin".

Ramadan is a School which after completion of one month course gives result to each believer, to evaluate his position. Ramadan is a sacred training School where a believer learns how to recharge one's spiritual batteries-to gain one's provision for the Akhirah. If one can not attain advantage from this month then when will he do so? This is the month for renewing our Aqidah, strengthening our willpower, and seeking Taubah, a unique opportunity to fortify the bond of love with our Creator, through Ibadah Zahirah & Aam'al Batinah. Sal'at and Zak'at are inter-connected and linked to the category of Ibadah Zahirah. Instructions have been given that Faraid should be done openly, so other people should be inclined towards it. Khair'at is under the head of Aam'al Batinah which has direct link to Allah alone.

It is a noted fact that after each Ramadan, on Eid holidays many people indulge in immoral, shameless and indecent activities of enjoyment, which Shariah condemns. People revert to entertainment of music, forbidden films, and women displaying their beautification etc. They spend lavishly on gambling, drinking, and profligacy, and consider it as a part of joy of the festival. Involvement of the Muslims in such nefarious activities is the major cause of humiliation and fall of Muslim Power worldwide. When non Muslims observe the ugly life style of Muslims they enjoy, and support them. Ramadan ends with Eid al Fitar but the deeds and actions displayed during Ramadan should serve as facilitator which should be followed throughout the year. Eid is a blissful occasion of Islam which has no concern with the festival of other faiths.

Divine help shall not reach to the corrupt by nature. Rehmah is not conferred upon those who only take the name of Allah and forget true actions. Islam is a religion of qualities, not faces or personalities. It has no concern with any community or locality, but it is universal, for all time to come. Instead of improving our own character, we are happy with our own brand of Islam. The teachings of Islam have become so contaminated with foreign customs, and un-Islamic ideologies, that a converted Muslim has to make an effort to search for the Qur'an and Sunnah brand of Islam or remain confused and ignorant. A few days earlier, a senior diplomat who converted to Islam a few months ago contacted me and requested to suggest an authentic book of Muslim Customs & Traditions. I advised him that it is better to perform Faraid of Islam and not to confuse himself in customs, as it is not a part of religion.

Know that Ramadan is an appearance of blessings; and can be a turning point in an individual's life; an opportunity of transformation towards an improved mode of life; a change from the disgrace of sins to the beauty of submission. We should not loose the blessings of Ramadan by falling back on our previous careless ways. Take hold of this blessing which gives a new shape to our lives, and thus become worthy of being called a Muslim.

May Allah grant us inspiration, strength and spirit to make this Ramadan as a start towards a new phase of our life. May He grant us the ability to abide by the Shariah.

Ramadan is the time to practice strongly, with the true concept of Taqwa (fear of Allah). May Allah allow us this opportunity to utilize our time in a positive and constructive manner, for the pleasure of Allah. Ramadan demands from each Muslim to avoid misdeeds, forbidden actions, such as vulgar language and discussion. Perhaps it may be our last Ramadan, our last opportunity to benefit from the special blessings and forgiveness that accompanies this month, for who knows we may be there or not to receive the blessings next year.

On the following 'Imami Dua' in a form of Farewell Sal'am I am closing this discussion:

"Ya Moulaya Allah'humma La Taqalibni Min Muzey'i Hazal Yawma illa Wa'qad Ghafarta Li Jami'a Zunubi Bi'Hawlika wa Quwatika wa Min'nika wa Ra'fatika"

(O my Moulai! O Allah! Do not transfer me from this place (world) but in a condition that You have forgiven all my sins with Your power and command and Naimah and affection), A'amin.

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