

# The Importance of Ramadan

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## 1. Introduction

The month of Ramadan is a blessed month and an opportunity for you to draw near to Allah, increase your spirituality, and gain abundant reward. The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him (PBUH)) described Ramadan as **“a great month, a blessed month.”** and a month in which “the believers’ provision is increased.”(Mishkat).

“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 the Qur’an, forgiving people, being kind to others, and giving charity to the poor.” (Sheikh M. S. Al-Munajjid, a prominent Saudi Muslim lecturer and author<sup>1</sup>).

For those who miss maximising their rewards in this month, the Prophet (PBUH) stated: “He who is deprived of its good has indeed suffered deprivation.” (Mishkat).

## 2. Why this month is important

This month is important for the following reasons:

- a) It was the month in which the Holy Quran was revealed. The Holy Quran states: “The month of Ramadan is that in which was revealed the Qur'an, wherein is guidance for mankind and the clear signs of guidance and distinction. (2:185). Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi, President of the North American Fiqh Council states<sup>2</sup>: “Ramadan is a great month. Allah chose this month and a particular night in this month to grace humanity with His Final Testament, His Last Message, the Qur’an. The moment of this revelation became a sacred moment, and that time and month became an eternal time for us. Allah chose this time, and He has filled it with His countless blessings. In this month we have a greater urge and desire to do good deeds. This month becomes the month of virtues and blessings for us.”

In addition to the revelation of the Quran, many scholars are of the opinion that Ramadan is also the month in which scriptures were revealed to Prophets Esa (Injeel/Bible), Dawood (Zaboor), Moosa (Tawrah/Old Testament), Ebrahim (Shifas), peace and blessings upon them all.

- b) Ramadan is the month that contains the best night of the year, which is Laylat Al-Qadr (the night of power). Many scholars are of the opinion that it was on this night that the Holy Quran was revealed from *Lowhul Mahooz* (sacred tablets) to the House of Glory (*Bayt Al-`Izzah*) in the lowest heaven, from where it was revealed piecemeal to the Prophet (PBUH) according to events that took place during his life over a period of 23 years. The Almighty

states: "We sent it (the Qur'an) down on a blessed night...."[i.e. the Night of Al-Qadr]. (44: 3-5) and "Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Power." (97:1)

The night of power is the most important night in the Islamic calendar. It is better than a thousand months. The Quran states: "And what will explain to thee what the Night of Power is? The night of Power is better than a thousand Months. Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand: Peace!.....This until the rise of Morn!" (97: 2-5).

Can you conceptualise the value of such a night? One night that is better than a thousand months (that is, 30,000 nights)! In his book *Fiqh-us-Sunnah*, the late Egyptian scholar Sheikh Sayyed Sabiq states: "The night of Qadr is the most virtuous night in the whole year. Any action that is done in this night, such as reciting the Qur'an, making mention of Allah, etc. is better than acting for one thousand months which do not contain the night of Qadr."

This is the night of contact between the Creator and His creation. The Quran states that the angels descend to hear the duas/supplications of those in prayer. In addition scholars are of the opinion that the spirit referred to by the Quran is Angel Gabriel and he also descends to hear us in prayer on this night.

Laylat Al-Qadr is discussed in more detail in a separate publication.

- c) We have been instructed by the Almighty to fast in the month of Ramadan so that we can attain piety. "Thus whosoever among you witness the month (Ramadan) must fast...." (al-Baqarah: 184). "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those who were before you, in order that you may learn *taqwa* (piety)."

Dr. Muhammad M. Abu Laylah, Professor of the Islamic Studies & Comparative Religions at Al-Azhar University, states<sup>3</sup>:

"Fasting in Ramadan is the best means to purify our souls and to set our thinking right. It strengthens not only our bodies but also our spirits. The purpose of fasting as Allah says in the Qur'an is to establish *taqwa* firmly in the heart.

"To have *taqwa* in the heart means to be strong in body and spirit and to be able to resist the temptation of evil and human desires and lust. Thus the impious person has no resistance or power to protect himself. That is why he can easily be overcome by evil and can easily follow his whims and personal longings, which can lead him to destruction and agony. *Taqwa*, which as we said is the purpose and the fruit of fasting, is wide in its sense. It embraces everything that can harm or benefit man."

Dalia Salaheldin, an author, states<sup>4</sup>: "A major goal of fasting the month of Ramadan is to realise and achieve a pious heart. Fasting produces piety. That is to say true and sincere fasting, within which one watches his/her glimpses and whims, and deeds of the heart, not only physical desires and acts. Abstaining lawful food, drink and sex is not the target of fasting. They are but the means by which one realise patience. And, patience is an act of the heart, not of the body. It is a fundamental chord of a pious heart."

- d) **Ramadan is the month in which the devils are chained up and the gates to paradise are open.** The Prophet (PBUH) said: "When the first night of Ramadan comes, the devils and rebellious jinns are put in chains and the doors of hell are closed, none of them remains open. The doors of heaven are open and none of them remains closed. And a caller calls, 'O seeker of goodness, come forward, and O seeker of evil, desist. And Allah has many (in this month) who will be freed from Hell.' This announcement is made every night." Reported by al-Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 618).

The Almighty has opened the gates of paradise and chained the devils – its now up to us to perform the required deeds (or to avoid performing certain deeds) to enter through these gates. We need to ensure that our conduct during this month (and always) is the best. Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi, President of the North American Fiqh Council states: "...Ramadan is a perfect environment for religious commitment and spiritual purity, but this very special environment maybe exposed to sinful pollution as a result of reckless members who have no sense of appreciation of the sanctity of the blessed month."

- e) **It is the month of victory.** Many great victories took place during this month for example, the battle of Badr, the battle of Al-Buwayb, the battle of Az-Zallaqah, the battle of `Ain Jalut, and in our modern history the October war.

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<sup>1</sup> A piece of advice to welcome Ramadan – Islamonline – 25/10/03

<sup>2</sup> Ramadan the month of virtue and blessings – Islamonline – 23/11/02 and 27/09/05

<sup>3</sup> Means of Enhancing Faith in the Last Days of Ramadan – Islamonline – 27 November 2002

<sup>4</sup> Live Dialogue – Are you ready for Ramadan, Islamonline, 2004