

Entering the Month of Ramadan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى

الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١﴾

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:

«أَنَا كُمْ رَمَضَانَ شَهْرٌ مُّبَارَكٌ، فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ

صِيَامَهُ، تُوْفِّحُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ، وَتُغْلَقُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ

الْجَحِيمِ، وَتُغْلَقُ فِيهِ مَرَدَّةُ الشَّيَاطِينِ»

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

With the Tarawih prayer that we will perform tonight after the Isha prayer, we will, Insha'Allah, welcome the Sultan of Months—Ramadan. Tonight, we will wake up for suhoor, intend to fast and enter this period of blessings and forgiveness. Endless praise and thanks be to Allah (swt) who has allowed us to reach this blessed month. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet (saw), whom we are honoured to follow.

Just as everything created by Almighty Allah in the universe has a purpose, so too does humanity, created as the most honoured of all beings. This purpose is to know and recognise Allah, to believe in Him and to worship Him. In addition, it is to establish truth, justice and morality, to eliminate oppression and to stand with what is right and with the oppressed. Our acts of worship and duties of servitude serve this purpose, training ourselves in this path for the happiness of both this world and the Hereafter.

In the verse we have recited, Allah (swt) states: "**O you who have believed! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you so that you may attain Taqwa (consciousness of Allah).**"¹ The purpose of fasting in Ramadan is hidden in the phrase "لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ" mentioned in the verse. This phrase is translated as "**so that you may be protected**" but also as "**so that you may be purified.**" Especially in our time, when we look at the media, the society we live in and the immense oppression and massacres occurring in our world, we see that humanity has become deeply polluted, hearts have rusted and consciences have decayed. That is why we need purification both physically and spiritually. The Ramadan we are under the shade of is mercy, forgiveness, purification and Taqwa. But when it leaves, it should leave us filled with all these qualities. Indeed, the word Ramadan itself means "**scorching heat.**" Therefore, Ramadan should burn away all evil so that humanity can truly benefit from it.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

In the hadith we have recited, the Messenger of Allah (saw) states: "**The blessed month of Ramadan has come to you. Allah has made fasting in this month obligatory upon you. In this month, the gates of Heaven are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the rebellious devils are chained.**"² This hadith shows us that for a believer who does good deeds and avoids evil in Ramadan, the gates of Paradise are opened, and the gates of Hell are closed. Since fasting enables a person to control their desires and resist following Shaytan, it restricts Shaytan's influence over them. If we consider the month of Ramadan as a school, then its curriculum and schedule has been directly arranged by Allah (swt). This program begins with suhoor and ends with iftar. However, the Prophet (saw) added Tarawih prayer to this program—serving as the night time complement to the daytime fasting, bringing peace to believers. Suhoor is not only recommended to help tolerate hunger throughout the day; rather, it is an opportunity for believers to wake up during the blessed pre-dawn hours when prayers are not rejected and to turn to Allah in supplication. The curriculum of this Ramadan school spans thirty days. It includes suhoor, imsaq, recitation of the Qur'an, iftar and Tarawih. It also encompasses Zakat, Zakat al-Fitr, remembrance of Allah (dhikr), reflection (tafakkur), Dua and itikaf. Within this program is Laylatul Qadr, the Night of Power, which is greater than a thousand months. Those who fulfill this program have the opportunity to attain the glad tidings of the Prophet (saw) as he mentioned: "**Whoever fasts during Ramadan with faith and in hope of reward from Allah, all their past sins will be forgiven.**"³

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

During the month of Ramadan, we must strive to instill moral values in our children, teach them our traditions and help them embrace them wholeheartedly. Ramadan should be seen as a unique opportunity for deepening their understanding and practice of Islam and this precious time should be utilised in the best possible way. We should decorate our mosques together with our children and participate in the Ramadan programs organised by our mosques.

As we stand in the shade of Ramadan—"**whose beginning is mercy, middle is forgiveness, and end is salvation from Hellfire**"⁴—we extend our heartfelt congratulations on this blessed month. We pray to Allah (swt) that it brings unity and strength to the Muslim Ummah and that it becomes a means of peace, harmony and salvation for all of humanity. Ameen.

¹ Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:183

² Nesâi, Siyâm, 5

³ Buhârî, Iman, 37

⁴ Beyhakî, Şuabu'l-Iman, 5/223; Kenzu'l-Ummal, 8/477