

My Respected Brothers and Sisters,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

All Praise is due to Alláh, We praise Him and we seek help from Him. We ask forgiveness from Him. We repent to Him; and we seek refuge in Him from our own evils and our own bad deeds. Anyone who is guided by Alláh, he is indeed guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no god but Alláh, the Only One without any partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad, peace and blessings on him, is His servant, and His messenger.

O People! The month of Allah (Ramadan) has come with its mercies, blessings and forgiveness. Allah has decreed this month the best of all months. The days of this month are the best among the days and the nights are the best among the nights and the hours during Ramadan are the best among the hours.

This is a month in which you have been invited by Him (to fast and pray). Allah has honoured you in it. In every breath you take is a reward of Allah, your sleep is worship, your good deeds are accepted and your invocations are answered.

In similarity to the Ramadan last year, the global COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing. We must ask ourselves:

1. How can we have #SafeRamadan this year?
2. How do we connect with Allah meaningfully while connecting with family and friends safely?
3. How do we make the best of Ramadan under the current lockdown restrictions?

Therefore, you must invoke your Lord in all earnestness with hearts free from sin and evil, and pray that Allah may help you to keep fast, and to recite the Holy Qur'an. Indeed! Miserable is the one who is deprived of Allah's forgiveness in this great month.

While fasting remember the hunger and thirst on the Day of Judgement. Give alms to the poor and needy. Pay respect to your elders, have sympathy for your youngsters and be kind towards your relatives, kinsmen and neighbours. Guard your tongue against unworthy words, and your eyes from scenes that are not worth seeing (forbidden) and your ears from sounds that should not be heard. Be kind to orphans so that if your children may become orphans they will also be treated with kindness.

Do repent to Allah for your sins and supplicate with raised hands at the times of prayer as these are the best times, during which Allah Almighty looks at His servants with mercy. Allah

Answers if they supplicate, responds if they call, grants if He is asked, and accepts if they entreat.

O people! You have made your conscience the slave of your desires. Make it free by invoking Allah for forgiveness. Your back may break from the heavy load of your sins, so prostrate yourself before Allah for long intervals, and make this load lighter. Understand fully that Allah has promised in His Honour and Majesty that, people who perform Salat and Sajda (prostration) will be guarded from Hell-fire on the Day of Judgement.

O people! If anyone amongst you arranges for Iftar (meal at sunset) for any believer, Allah will reward him as if he had freed a slave, and Allah will forgive him his sins.” A companion said: ‘but not all of us have the means to do so,’ to which the Prophet (S) replied: ‘Keep yourself away from Hell-fire though it may consist of half a date or even some water if you have nothing else.’

“O people! Anyone who, during this month cultivates good manners, will walk over the Sirat (bridge to Paradise) on the day when feet will tend to slip. For anyone who during this month eases the workload of his servants, Allah will make easy his accounting, and for anyone who doesn’t hurt others during this month, Allah will safeguard him from His Anger on the Day of Judgement. Anyone who respects and treats an orphan with kindness during this month, Allah shall look at him with kindness on that Day. Anyone who treats his kinsmen well during this month, Allah will bestow His Mercy on him on that Day, while anyone who mistreats his kinsmen during this month, Allah will keep away from His Mercy.

Whomever offers the recommended prayers during this month, Allah will save him from Hell, and whomever observes his obligations during this month, his reward will be seventy times the reward during other months. Whomever repeatedly invokes Allah’s blessings on me, Allah will keep his scale of good deeds heavy, while the scales of others will be tending to lightness. Whomever recites during this month an Ayaat (verse) of the Qur’an, will get the reward of reciting the whole Qur’an in other months.

O people! The gates of Paradise remain open during this month. Pray to your Lord that they may not be closed for you; while the gates of Hell are closed, pray to your Lord that they never open for you. Satan has been chained, invoke your Lord not to let him dominate you.”

It is a blessed Month of opportunity for gaining maximum blessings, forgiveness and developing our resilience; to train ourselves to build our internal capacity to face the daily challenges of life and prepare ourselves for the hereafter

May Allah accept our fasting which we do only for His sake. We do not fast just to lose weight or to show off to others, how religious we are. We fast because we love Allah, and we want to please Him. We owe Him so much. Fasting is a very small thing that HE asks us to do, only for Him. Allah says in the Holy Quran: "Fasting is for Me alone, and I will give rewards for it." Allah doesn't specify how much, 10 times, 70 times or 700 times. Allah gives rewards for fasting, from His limitless bounty, "*bi ghairi hisaab*," without limits.

Due to this, as well as the suffering from the pain of hunger, thirst and weakness of the body due to fasting, 'Abdullaah Ibn 'Umar, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam said, 'No one knows the reward of fasting except Allaah'. (Al-Bayhaqi

Abu Hurayrah, may Allaah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam said, "All the (rewards of the) deeds of the son of Adam are for him, (he is aware that) the reward of performing them will be multiplied by ten to seven-hundred times. Allaah has said, 'Except for fasting, as it is for Me. I shall reward it. (i.e. I will decide what the reward will be) This is because the fasting person leaves his desires, food and drink purely for My sake.' The fasting person has two times of great pleasure: once when he breaks his fast and the other when he meets his Lord. The smell coming from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the scale of Allaah than the smell of musk". (Ahmad)

Among the virtues of this blessed month is that the reward for good deeds is multiplied by up to seven hundred times, for those who purify their intentions and perform their actions purely for the sake of Allaah – such as those who spend in charity from their wealth, provided that their wealth comes from lawful means.

Allaah only accepts charity which is from Halaal (lawful) means. The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam said, 'Allaah accepts charity with His Right Hand and then increases it in reward for the person giving it, just like one of you raises his colt, until the reward for it becomes the size of a mountain'. (Bukhaari & Muslim)

The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam was asked which was the best type of charity, he sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam replied, "The charity of Ramadhān (or given during Ramadhān)." (Tirmithi)

I pray that you and I will be amongst those whom Allah rewards, without limits.

May Allah multiply the rewards of our fasts, grant us forgiveness for our sins and freedom from the Fire, and allow us to drink from the Prophet's (saw) fountain, Ameen.