

FRIDAY MESSAGE

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Beyond Ramadan: Sustaining Devotion and Embracing Consistency

The month of Ramadan is undoubtedly a special time, a period in which Muslims around the world are enveloped in an aura of spirituality, self-restraint, and kindness. It is a time when the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained, as narrated in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. This blessed month acts as a divine training camp, fortifying our willpower, purifying our souls, and enhancing our connection with Allah. Yet, the true essence of this experience lies in how we carry its spirit forward into the rest of the year.

Ramadan is a testament to the incredible potential for goodness within the hearts of believers. It is during this month that we find ourselves immersed in acts of worship, recitation of the Quran, and generosity toward others in a way that may seem unattainable in other months. However, the challenge arises when the crescent moon of Shawwal appears, marking the end of Ramadan. For some, this moment heralds a return to old habits, neglecting acts of worship, or falling into sin. How, then, can we ensure that the blessings of Ramadan leave a lasting impact on our lives?

The Call to Consistency

The key lies in the principle of *istiqamah*, or steadfastness. As the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advised in a profound

hadith narrated by Muslim: *"Say, I believe in Allah, and then remain steadfast."* This simple yet powerful statement underscores the importance of adhering to the path of righteousness, even when the external motivators of Ramadan are absent.

Allah reminds us in the Quran:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and do not invalidate your deeds." (Surah Muhammad: 33)

This verse serves as a caution against undoing the progress we have made during Ramadan. Imagine a weaver who painstakingly creates a strong and beautiful garment, only to unravel it thread by thread. Such is the state of a person who abandons the good habits cultivated during the holy month.

The Trap of Neglect

One of the most common pitfalls after Ramadan is the neglect of the masjid and congregational prayers. During Ramadan, the masjid becomes a hub of activity, filled with the sounds of Tarawih prayers and Quranic recitation. After Ramadan, however, attendance often dwindles. Similarly, the Quran, which was lovingly recited every night in Ramadan, may find itself closed and gathering dust on a shelf.

Another challenge lies in the distractions of modern life, such as indulgence in television shows, social media, and other forms of entertainment. It is easy to fall into these traps, but as believers, we must strive

to remain vigilant and avoid what distances us from Allah.

Building Upon Good Deeds

A hallmark of a sincere believer is the desire to build upon the good deeds performed during Ramadan. As the Quran reminds us: *"And do not be like the woman who untwisted her spun thread after it was strong."* (Surah An-Nahl: 92)

The acts of worship that drew us closer to Allah in Ramadan—fasting, prayer, charity, and kindness—should not be confined to a single month. Instead, they should serve as the foundation for a year-round commitment to devotion.

One way to maintain the spirit of Ramadan is through voluntary acts of worship, such as fasting the six days of Shawwal. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: *"Whoever fasts Ramadan and then follows it with six days of Shawwal, it is as if he fasted for the entire year."* (Sahih Muslim)

The Beauty of Consistency

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of consistency in worship when he said: *"The most beloved deeds to Allah are those that are most consistent, even if they are few."* (Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

This principle can be applied to all aspects of our lives. Whether it is maintaining daily prayers, reading even a small portion of the Quran, or giving to charity regularly, the key is to remain steadfast. Even small, consistent acts can have a profound impact on our spiritual growth.

Reconnecting with the Quran

Ramadan is often referred to as the "month of the Quran," and for good reason. The Quran serves as a guide for humanity, offering wisdom, solace, and inspiration. To continue reaping its benefits, we must make an effort to engage with it regularly,

even outside of Ramadan. We must set aside a few minutes each day to read and reflect upon its verses, allowing its teachings to illuminate our path.

Strengthening the Bond with Allah

Ultimately, our journey as believers is one of constant effort to strengthen our bond with Allah. Acts of worship, both obligatory and voluntary, serve as means of drawing closer to Him. Remember the words of Jesus (peace be upon him): *"And He has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I remain alive."* (Surah Maryam: 31)

This divine directive highlights the lifelong nature of our commitment to Allah. There is no end to the pursuit of righteousness, for it is a journey that extends until our final breath.

A Message of Hope

As we transition from Ramadan to the rest of the year, let us carry with us the lessons of this blessed month. Let us strive to remain steadfast in our worship, consistent in our good deeds, and vigilant against distractions. And let us remember that the fruit of a good deed is another good deed, as Allah guides us along the path of righteousness.

Take heart in the glad tidings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): *"Whoever prays Isha in congregation, it is as if he has stood for half the night. And whoever prays Fajr in congregation, it is as if he has prayed the entire night."* (Sahih Muslim)

May we embrace the blessings of Ramadan not as a fleeting moment, but as a transformative experience that shapes our lives. And may we always remain connected to our Creator, finding solace, strength, and success in His guidance.