

FRIDAY MESSAGE

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Ramadan, a month of transformation.

Ramadan, the month of mercy, forgiveness, and spiritual renewal, beckons us to embark on a transformative journey. It is a time when the gates of Paradise swing open, the gates of Hell are shut, and the whispers of temptation are silenced.

This is not merely a symbolic gesture, but a profound reality that resonates throughout the heavens and earth. Imagine, a time when the very fabric of existence shifts, aligning itself with your pursuit of virtue. The doors to divine grace are flung wide, inviting you to step through and enter into the light of Allah's mercy.

The chains of the devils are bound, their influence weakened, allowing you to break free from the shackles of bad habits and negative thoughts. This is your chance to conquer your inner demons, to rise above the whispers of doubt and despair.

Imagine a school for the soul, where the curriculum focuses on discipline, empathy, and connection with the Divine. This is Ramadan. It begins with conscious choices: guarding your gaze from distractions, silencing the chatter of negativity from your tongue, and protecting your heart from harmful influences. This is not about restriction; it is about liberation – freeing yourself from the chains of bad habits and embracing the power of self-control.

Have you ever felt the pang of hunger and remembered those less fortunate? Ramadan brings this feeling to the forefront, fostering empathy and inspiring generosity.

It is a reminder that we are all interconnected, and true fulfilment comes from sharing our blessings with others. This humbling experience breaks down the walls of self-centeredness and builds bridges of compassion.

Think of your soul as a wild horse, full of energy and potential, but needing guidance. Fasting is the rein that helps you tame those restless desires, directing them towards a higher purpose. It's a chance to break free from the distractions of the world and reconnect with what truly matters. This newfound clarity allows you to see your own strengths and weaknesses, giving you the power to overcome challenges and achieve your goals.

Ramadan, a month of generosity.

The story of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his unparalleled generosity, especially during Ramadan, is a powerful source of inspiration for us all.

The Hadith tells us that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the most generous of people, a quality that reached its zenith during Ramadan. Imagine this: the best of humanity, already known for his kindness and compassion, becoming even more generous during this special time. This highlights the transformative power of Ramadan, a period where our hearts soften, our connection to the divine deepens, and our desire to give back to others intensifies.

What made the Prophet (peace be upon him) so exceptionally generous during Ramadan? The Hadith reveals a key factor:

his meetings with the Angel Jibriel, where they would study the Quran together. This reminds us of the profound link between spiritual growth and generosity.

As we immerse ourselves in acts of worship, reflection, and connection with the divine, our hearts naturally open, making us more receptive to the needs of others. The Quran, a guide for humanity, inspires us to act with compassion, justice, and generosity.

The Hadith uses a beautiful image to convey the Prophet's (peace be upon him) generosity: he was "more generous with good than the fast wind." Think of the wind, powerful and unrestrained, carrying blessings far and wide. This metaphor captures the essence of true generosity: giving freely, abundantly, and without expecting anything in return. It suggests a spirit of boundless giving, where kindness flows effortlessly, like the wind itself.

This Ramadan, let us be inspired by the Prophet's (peace be upon him) example. Let us strive to unleash our inner generosity, not just with our wealth, but also with our time, our words, and our compassion

The Prophet (ﷺ) was the most generous of all the people, and he used to become more generous in Ramadan when Jibriel met him. Jibriel used to meet him every night during Ramadan to revise the Qur'an with him. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) then used to be more generous than the fast wind. (Bukhari and Muslim from Ibn Abbas)

"Fasting is a shield. So, the person observing fasting should avoid sexual relation with his wife and should not behave foolishly and impudently, and if somebody fights with him or abuses him, he should tell him twice, 'I am fasting.'" (Bukhari from Abu Huraira)

Fasting as a shield.

Fasting, often described as a shield, offers protection in this world and the hereafter. It safeguards us from sin by curbing desires and guarding our physical and spiritual selves. In this life, it helps us resist temptation, while in the afterlife, it acts as a barrier against hellfire. The power of fasting lies in its ability to subdue our base desires, which are often exploited by negative influences. Overindulgence, on the other hand, can lead to sin and weaken our Imaan.

According to Al Ghazzali, there are three levels of fasting: The first level, the fast of the common people, focuses on the basic requirements of abstaining from food, drink, and sexual activity. This is the most fundamental form of fasting, addressing the physical needs and desires.

The second level, the fast of the elect, elevates the practice by encompassing the restraint of all senses and limbs. This means not only abstaining from physical pleasures but also guarding the eyes from inappropriate sights, the ears from idle gossip, the tongue from harmful words, and the hands and feet from wrongful actions. This level emphasizes the importance of aligning our outward actions with our inner intentions.

Finally, the highest level, the fast of the elect of the elect, delves into the realm of the heart. This involves purifying the heart from worldly concerns, base thoughts, and anything that distracts from the remembrance of God. It is a complete dedication of the heart and mind to the divine, a state of profound spiritual connection. This level of fasting transcends the physical and focuses on the deepest aspects of our being.

The meaning of Ramadan signifies intense heat. This is because the obligation to fast for the first time coincided during the summer month. It also reflects the intense burning of the fasting person's stomach due to thirst. Fasting also burns away the sins.