

FRIDAY MESSAGE

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The great scholar Ibn al-Jawzi, once drew a beautiful analogy between the months of the year and the story of Prophet Ya'qub and his sons, peace be upon them. He compared the twelve months to the twelve sons of Yaqub, and the month of Ramadan to Yusuf, the most beloved of them all. Just as Yusuf held a special place in his father's heart, Ramadan holds a special place in the sight of Allah, the Knower of the unseen.

This analogy is profound and deeply inspiring. Yusuf's brothers, who had once wronged him, later turned to him in their time of need. Despite their past mistakes, Yusuf forgave them, provided for them, and restored their well-being. He fed them in their hunger, healed their brokenness, and allowed them to return to their father with honour. In this way, one person—Yusuf—mended the shortcomings of eleven others.

Ramadan, too, is a month of mending and renewal. It is a time when we turn to Allah, seeking to repair what we have broken, to correct our mistakes, and to make up for the shortcomings of the past eleven months. It is a month of hope, where we strive to purify our hearts, rectify our actions, and seek forgiveness for our sins. Just as Yusuf's brothers found redemption through him, we too can find redemption through the blessings of Ramadan.

Ibn al-Jawzi also reminds us of another powerful moment in the story of Yaqub and Yusuf. When Yaqub caught the scent of Yusuf's shirt, his strength returned, his vision was restored, and his heart was filled

with joy. After years of weakness and blindness, he became strong and sighted once more. This is a beautiful metaphor for the transformative power of Ramadan

For the sinner, Ramadan is like that divine scent—a chance to awaken the soul, to regain strength after weakness, and to find clarity after confusion. When the fragrance of Ramadan reaches us, it calls us to return to Allah, to leave behind our sins, and to embrace a life of righteousness. It is a time to reconnect with our Creator, to renew our faith, and to emerge stronger, purer, and more focused on what truly matters.

Ramadan is not just a month; it is a lifeline, a second chance, and a source of divine inspiration. Let us seize it with both hands and make it a turning point in our lives.

Let us approach this blessed month with hope and determination. Let us see it as an opportunity to mend our brokenness, to heal our hearts, and to seek Allah's mercy and forgiveness. Let us strive to make the most of every moment, knowing that Ramadan is a gift—a chance to reset, to grow, and to draw closer to Allah.

And when Ramadan ends, may it conclude for us with joy and happiness, just as Yaqub's story ended with reunion and celebration. May we emerge from this month stronger in faith, clearer in purpose, and filled with gratitude for the countless blessings of our Lord.

Ramadan and Ihsaan. Excellence, or Ihsan, is to perform deeds with precision and quality, feeling their importance and carrying them out as required without needing human supervision or praise. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) defined Ihsan as: "To worship Allah as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He certainly sees you."

Fasting is one of the acts of worship that is farthest from showing off and hypocrisy. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Every act of the son of Adam is for him, except fasting, which is for Me, and I shall reward it. He gives up his desire and his food for My sake." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Hurairah). In fasting, there is a special quality that is not found in other acts of worship; it is attributed to Allah alone, as He says: "Fasting is for Me, and I shall reward it." This special attribution adds honour to fasting, just as the Kaaba was honoured by its attribution to Allah

The Quran and Ramadan. Ramadan is intrinsically linked to the Quran, as it was during this month that the holy book was revealed. Allah says: "The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion." (Quran 2: 185). We are encouraged to increase the recitation and reflection on the Quran during this blessed month, seeking its guidance in all aspects of life. The Quran describes itself as a source of mercy, wisdom, and clarity, offering solutions to life's challenges and distinguishing between right and wrong. It serves as a reminder for those who seek knowledge, admonition, and spiritual growth

Patience in Obedience and Worship. Fasting teaches us patience. True success in life is intertwined with patience in fulfilling our religious duties. In the journey of faith, patience in performing acts of worship and refraining from sins is crucial. While many find it easier to be patient in fulfilling their duties, the real challenge lies in abstaining from wrongdoings. This patience, rooted in piety, not only protects us from sin but also elevates our standing with Allah.

In our fast-paced world, the virtues of patience and noble morals often seem overshadowed by the rush to achieve quick results and instant gratification. Yet, it's these very qualities that serve as the bedrock of true success and fulfilment. As we navigate through life's trials and temptations, embracing patience and nurturing our character can lead us to a higher state of contentment and spiritual growth.

The essence of Islam is not just about performing acts of worship but also about embodying noble character. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized this when he said, "I was sent only to perfect noble character." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). Our faith is most complete when we strive to possess the best of morals. It's this character that defines our interactions, shapes our community, and reflects our devotion to our Creator.

O believers! Fasting is prescribed for you—as it was for those before you—so perhaps you will become mindful of Allah. Fast a prescribed number of days. But whoever of you is ill or on a journey, then let them fast an equal number of days after Ramadan. For those who can only fast with extreme difficulty, compensation can be made by feeding a needy person for every day not fasted. But whoever volunteers to give more, it is better for them. And to fast is better for you, if only you knew. (Quran, 2:183-184)