

Ramadan and Quran - An Inseparable Pair



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surely all praise is due to Allah the Lord, Evolver, Maintainer of all that exists, the One Who taught and teaches the Quran and Who has created the human one. He sent the Quran down onto the heart of His servant and messenger, Muhammad so that he would take us out of darknesses into the Light, by the permission of Our Lord. Then praise belongs to Allah, the Exalted, the Wise. We seek forgiveness from Him for our wrongs. We seek His help and support for every effort of good and we turn repentantly to Him again and again. Then, we bear witness that there is no god except Allah and we bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

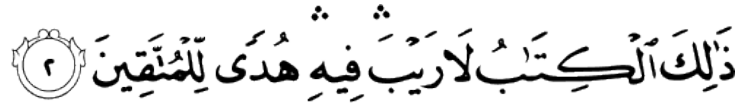
Ramadan and Quran – An Inseparable Pair

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ
وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ
فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ
أُخْرٍ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ
وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَىٰكُمْ
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Quran was caused to descend as guidance for humanity and clarification of the guidance and the means of discernment. So whoever of you witnesses the month s/he should fast. And, whoever is sick or on a journey, then a (similar) number from other days. Allah wants ease for you and He does not want difficulty for you. And (He wants) that you complete the number (of days), and that you magnify Allah because He has guided you and that you will be grateful. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 2: ayah 185)

As we see this ayah opens with the name of this 9th lunar month and immediately links the month to the revealed, noble Recitation. Thus, one of the attributes, in fact the main attribute of Ramadan is “*Shahru ul Quran*” – *Month of Quran*. Although we generally focus more on the sawm (the fast), what we see in this ayah is that the fast is the background, the environment and even the support for what occurs with the Quran and the designated recipients – the human race.

When Allah, *izza wa jalla*, says, “*falyasuum*” (then s/he should fast), He wants us to engage in what will increase our ability to appreciate, interact with and be meaningfully changed by the Book. He already told us in ayah 183 that fasting or disciplined restraint is prescribed so that we will become more aware and develop abilities to guard our souls, to have taqwa. Then He said at the beginning of this Surah that the Book has *hudan* (guidance) for those who are engaged in consciously guarding the self / the soul.



That is the Book. There is nothing disquieting in him; guidance for those who consciously guard (the soul-s). (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 2: ayah 2)

As Allah is using variations of the same basic word – *waqaya* – to protect, to guard against harm and evil, we should ponder and reflect on the connections. At the beginning of this Surah (Al Baqarah) Allah says that the Book is a guide or has guidance for the *mutaqqi*, the one who saves and protects his/her moral character, his/her natural state as gifted by the Creator. Then, further into the Surah Allah says fasting is prescribed as a means to develop this ability to guard and protect. Taqwa is needed in order to be in the condition that enables and facilitates one to receive the guidance embedded in the Quran. Ramadan is the month of the Quran, an annual, universal remembrance of the Quran coming into this lower world.

In a Hadith that reports a Khutbah given by the Prophet (saw) on the last day of Sha’baan, the 8th month, it is reported that the Prophet (saw) said, “***This is a month whose days are the best of days, whose nights are the best of nights and whose hours are the best of hours.***” (interpreted translation) The entire month is full of / charged with the memory of the *wahyi* (revelation) of Allah. In two separate Tafseer of the Quran we find:

“The Suhuf (Voluminous Pages) of Ibraheem were revealed during the first night of Ramadan. The Torah was revealed during the sixth night of Ramadan. The Injeel was revealed during the thirteenth night of Ramadan. Allah revealed the Quran on the twenty fourth night of Ramadan.” (Recorded by Ahmad 4: 107; Tafseer of Ibn Katheer; Volume 1)

“The Torah was sent down on the sixth of Ramadan, the Injeel on the twelfth, the Psalms (Labor) on the eighteenth and the Quran on the Night of Destiny (Laylat ul Qadr) in Ramadan” (An Enlightening Commentary; Volume 2)

Though the two ahaadith differ in specifics, the point to take is that this month is the preferred month, preferred by the Creator of months for His revelation to humanity. For that reason one of the names or realities of Ramadan is “*shahrin ‘adheem*” (the exalted month, the greatest month, the preferred month). Any entity that has this attribute of ‘*adheem* has been given preference by Allah to others of that class. For example, *Surah tul Faatihah* is *Suratun ‘Adheematun* because she excels in rank above all the other 113 suwar. Ramadan is exalted by Allah to be the month in which He sends corrective guidance to a human creation that has deviated from the Path that leads back to Him. Since we know there have been many Messengers sent to guide humanity over the many centuries of our time on earth,

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ
عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا

And Messengers We have narrated them (their stories) to you before and Messengers We have not narrated to you. And Allah spoke to Musa with direct speech. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 4: ayah 164)

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ
اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ
الْمُبْطِلُونَ

And, truly, We have sent messengers before you. Of them there are some whose stories We have narrated to you, and of them there are those whose stories we have not narrated to you. And it was not for any Prophet to bring a sign except by the permission of Allah. Then, when the command of Allah came, judgment was given with true justice. And those who supported lies were lost then and there. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 40:ayah 78)

Allah has always sent Messengers and Prophets from among the tribes and nations to give good news and to warn. They are to remind the people of the truth from Allah.

“Although the Quran contains mention of twenty-six Prophets, Islamic Tradition holds that there were many more, in fact 124,000. Here (Surah 4) and in Surah 40: 78, the Quran explicitly indicates that there are Prophets not mentioned in the Quran, whose stories Allah has not recounted to Muhammad and his followers thus alluding to the universal reality of revelation and keeping the door open for sacred figures of other traditions, such as the Buddha and Confucius to be considered prophets to their religious communities, as they were later by some Muslim scholars familiar with these other religious traditions.” (Study Quran; Commentary to Surah 4: 164)

So, with these truths in mind, both from the Quran and Hadith, we can understand that this month is full of the energy and memory of the numerous revelations that have passed through the heavens to human hearts. We can completely understand the attributes of *‘Adheem and Mubarak*. There is not a day or a night that is not filled with the memory of these amazing events. Thus, Ramadan is an *‘Eid* for us, a recurring celebration of the wahyi of Allah to our ancestors and to us and we are all *ahlu al Kitaab*. As followers of Muhammad (saw) we are to engage ourselves for the entire month with the *haqq* of al Quran and the *dhikr and hamd* for Allah.

Then, as we approach the end of the month, we spiritually search for the Night in which Malak Jibreel (as) descended with our Book. For all of this Allah says, **“Falyasumhu.”** Allah is requesting saum for a fixed number of days. Note there are two words – *siyaam and saum*. Siyaam is embedded in the saum, which is what Allah wants from us, particularly in this month. In the Quran there are some details given of siyaam (Surah 2: 183; 187; 193, Surah 5: 89 and Surah 58: 3 – 4), but where we find the saum specifically mentioned is in the Hadith al Qudsiyyah:

Allah, Powerful and Magnificent, said, **“Fasting (asSaum) is mine and I will give the reward for him. S/he (the servant) gives up his/her desires and his/her food and his/her drink for My sake (for the delayed reward). And the fasting (saum) is a shield.** ... (interpreted meaning of a Hadith recorded by Bukharee, Muslim, Tirmidhee and others)

What is asSaum?

Even from ayah 183 of Al Baqarah the Commentators of the Quran say that it is deduced that fasting is made compulsory for every portion of the body. Thus, fasting of the ears means not listening to evil or sinful things. Fasting of the eyes means not to look at any form of sinful or immoral acts, pictures or scenes. Fasting of the thoughts and feelings is to keep them from focusing on what is shameful and reprehensible.

The importance of these additional aspects to be considered in the fast cannot be ignored, for Allah says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

He is the One Who has developed for you the hearing, the sight and the feelings. Little is the appreciation you give. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 23: ayah 78)

Gratitude for any gift means preserving and protecting what is given out of love for the gift and the Giver. For these faculties it is being grateful and guarding their uses, for:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

Don't go after that about which you have no knowledge. Surely the hearing, the sight, and the feelings, there will be a questioning about each of them. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 17: ayah 36)

Movement - the Intended and Desired Result

الرَّكَتَبُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى
النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

Alif, Laam, Raa. A Book We caused to be revealed to you so that you will take humanity from the darknesses to the Light, by the permission of their Guardian Evolver, to the Path of the Exalted, the Praised. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 14: ayah 1)

Revelation comes to restore the direction of humanity to the proper direction of seeking nearness, turning to Allah and moving closer. Allah directs us to this from the very beginning of the Quran in Surah tul Faatihah in a very subtle manner, becoming of *Al-Lateef*. Notice the pronoun change, how in ayaat 1 – 4 we are taught to speak of Allah as ‘*huwa*’, but as we reach ayah 5 Allah is above us and in front of us as ‘*anta*’. The entire Book is designed to move us, to correct us, to refine us to purify us, to teach us, to reveal to us what Allah wills to be revealed, to elevate us in the eyes of Our Creator and render us pleasing to Him. The Blessed Month immerses us in that concentrated process and lets us exit, as a result of our attentive work and sacrifice, pure, renewed and closer.

Following is a portion of one version of the Khutbah of the Prophet given on the last day of Sha’baan, the 8th lunar month,

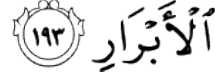
Oh people, Allah’s month has approached you laden with blessing, mercy and forgiveness. It is a month which Allah regards as the best of all months. Its days, in the sight of Allah, are the best of days; its nights are the best of nights; and its hours are the best of hours.

It is a month in which you are invited to be the guests of Allah, and you are regarded during it as worthy of Allah’s Grace. In this month your breathing praises Allah, and your sleeping adores Him. Your deeds (of worship) are accepted and your pleas are answered therein. Therefore, ask Allah, your Lord, in sincere intentions and pure hearts to enable you to observe the fast and to recite His Book (the Quran) during this month, for only a wretch is the one who is deprived of Allah’s Forgiveness in this great month.

Let your hunger and thirst during it remind you of the hunger and the thirst of the Day of Judgment. Give alms to the poor and indigent among you, respect your elderly and be kind to your youngsters, and strengthen blood-kinship of yours. Safeguard your tongues (from sin), do not look at what Allah has prohibited your eyes from watching and do not listen to what your ears are forbidden to hear. Be kind to the orphans of other people, so that your own orphans be consequently given affection ... (from An Enlightening Commentary)

Duah

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيْمَانِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَءَامَنَّا
رَبَّنَا فَءَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ
الْءَبْرَارِ



Our Sustaining Lord, surely we heard a caller calling to security saying 'Become secure with your Lord.' Then, we secured ourselves (believed). Our Lord, then forgive us our sins and remove from us our faults and take our souls with the virtuous ones. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 3: ayah 193)

Resources:

-Quran al Kareem (Arabic)
-Tafseer of Ibn Katheer
-The Study Quran

-Translation and Commentary of Quran by Yusuf Ali
-An Enlightening Commentary
-Virtues of Ramadhan; Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhlawi