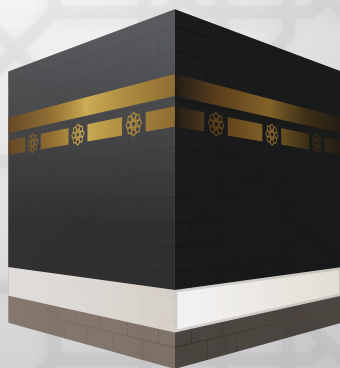


RAMADAN IS HERE make it your best!



Published By:



DARUL IHSAN
HUMANITARIAN CENTRE
GUIDANCE • UBUNTU • EMPOWERMENT



RAMADAN IS HERE make it your best!

**A compilation of short
motivational articles to prepare
one for the blessed month**

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RAMADAN IS HERE MAKE IT YOUR BEST!

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DARUL IHSAN
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Message from Darul Ihsan Islamic Centre

The month of Ramadan cannot be compared to anything in terms of spiritual benefit and reformation. It is reported in a Hadith, **“If people only knew the true value of Ramadan, they would anticipate the entire year to be Ramadan.”**

Only an unfortunate person will squander the opportunities of this extraordinary month. Through the pages of this book there are many golden advices that can help one to maximize these opportunities and earn the mercy and forgiveness we are all so direly in need of.

Ramadan engages us spiritually through the fast of the day, the Taraweeh at night, long vigils of the last ten nights, giving charity and displaying warmth to others, eagerness to learn and improve our faith, heightened levels of patience and tolerance and a desire to seek from the unlimited treasures of the Almighty.

The ultimate goal of this toil is to attain Taqwa. Taqwa is the ability to be constantly conscious of Allah Ta'ala and be obedient to Him at every moment.

Ultimately the month of Ramadan is here to teach us the lesson of life. A person who spends Ramadan in a focused and dedicated manner, making full use of every moment and avoiding all acts of vain and futility, enjoys real satisfaction and fulfillment on the day of Eid.

Similarly, one who will spend his entire life like Ramadan will enjoy the fulfillment and satisfaction of his toil at the time of death. The joy of this 'Eid' will be everlasting and perpetual.

May Allah bless all Muslims with a fruitful Ramadan and a joyous Eid.





THE COUNTDOWN FOR RAMADAN BEGINS

Making everything to the “T”

Mufti Zubair Bayat

The countdown has already begun. Just a few days remain for the arrival of Holy Ramadan. The very name of Ramadan evokes a feeling of expectant joy and pleasure in the heart of the believer. A restlessness overtakes the believer in eager anticipation of the Holy month. Sometimes, this feeling even turns to fear and anxiety. “O Allah, will I see Ramadan this year?”

Allah Ta'ala alone knows who will live to see Ramadan. The reassurance comes in the form of a fervent Dua, “O Allah bless us in Rajab and Sha'baan and let us make it to Ramadan.” The Dua for this must continue with vigorous fervour – “O Allah! Let us reach Ramadan!”

The anticipation of this great month is not just a matter of emotion and thought. It requires action and activity. Preparation

for receiving the honourable guest of Ramadan must start in earnest right away. Where do I start? What am I to do?

Well, a good starting point can be to spare a bit of time daily for preparation of Ramadan. A person needs to start by making adjustments to the current lifestyle. The daily timetable must be altered, allowing more time for spiritual rejuvenation. Can I take out quality time from my present busy lifestyle? How much of time and when? Sit down and work it out. Maybe half an hour before Fajr and another half-hour before going to bed? Or will half an hour before and after Esha be more appropriate?

Whatever it may be, at least an hour out of 24 hours must be set aside with discipline and consistency from today onwards. This is time dedicated to Allah and Allah alone. Unless for an emergency, no intrusion in this time must be allowed – no phone calls or other distractions. This time should be spent in developing a strong bond of love and affinity with the Noble Qur'an, with Dua and Zikr.

A lot of time must be spent in introspection and self-appraisal. What is my current state of Islam? Strong or weak? What are main weaknesses? How do I overcome these? Who do I turn to for spiritual help and guidance? Deep, soul-searching questions have to be posed. This is one of the highest form of Ibadah. It is the

Ibadah of Fikr or Tafakkur, a moment of which equals many years of Nafil Ibadah.

Finally, all the “T's” of Ramadan Shareef must be kept in mind so that when Ramadan comes, “everything is to the T!”. These “T's” are: Tilawah, Tahajjud, Taraweeh, Tasbeehat, Tadharru' (fervent Dua), Tatawwu' (Nafil Ibadah), Tasahhur (eating Sehri), Taubah (repentance), Tawadhu (humility) and Tafakkur (contemplation).

May Allah Ta'ala make this Ramadan a turning point in the life of the long-suffering Ummah. Aameen.





RAMADAN

THE BENEFICIAL SCORCHER

Mufti Zubair Bayat

Once more, the honourable guest, Holy Ramadan is here. The word “Ramadan” comes from the Arabic root word denoting “scorching heat”, “parched thirst”, “intense dryness”, “sun-baked ground”, etc. Thus, Ramadan is so called to indicate the burning sensation in the stomach as a result of hunger and the dryness of the throat due to thirst. Ramadan also “scorches out” the sins of the Muslim as if burning it to the ground. In another sense, the hearts and souls soak up the spiritual warmth of Ramadan, just as the sand and stones are receptive to the sun's heat. Heat is also used as a medical treatment to remove and drive out toxins, cold and other harmful substances from the body. In a similar manner, the heat of Ramadan will expunge and “dry out” greed, arrogance, indifference and other spiritual maladies from the soul of man. Again, intense heat is vital to all manufacturing processes as metals, plastic, glass, wood, etc. are all moulded into various products under scorching temperatures. Similarly, the heart of

man is cast into a beautiful spiritual mould in the heat of the crucible of Ramadan, thereby becoming a wonderful receptacle of piety and righteousness!

Tremendous benefits of fasting

Fasting is not a mindless exercise of torturing the body by remaining hungry and thirsty, but is extremely meaningful and produces tremendous benefits for the fasting person, some of which are summarized as follows:

- Increased devotions in Ramadan make a Muslim feel closer to the Creator, and generate appreciation for all His provisions; food, water, etc. as a boon and blessing from the month, feelings of generosity, soft heartedness and good-will towards others are developed. Rasulullah ﷺ was more generous than the fast blowing wind in this month.
- Through the self-control and discipline of fasting, a Muslim develops tolerance, patience, contentment, good manners, good speech and good habits.
- Ramadan causes a change in life's routine, which results in healthy lifestyle habits – particularly with regard to diet, eating habits and less smoking.

- Because fasting is a collective activity, it creates a sense of belonging to a huge global family of believers and strengthens the bonds of family ties and Islamic brotherhood on a local level as well.

First hand sympathy with the poor and hungry

One of the outstanding benefits of fasting is that a Muslim experiences hunger and thirst, and thus personally identifies with the plight of the hungry and poor, thereby generating a real and intense degree of sympathy and concern for the underprivileged who have so little to eat every day. This in turn makes Muslims reach out to the poor and render them all forms of assistance. One who does not, from time to time experience this hunger first hand, cannot truly empathise with the poor and hungry and this has a bearing on the effectiveness of any relief programmes operated by such people.. Ramadan is a very special month, but it is important for the benefits of this month to remain throughout the year. The spirit of piety and spiritual elevation experienced in Ramadan should stay on during our “normal” lives in the eleven months - and when the spiritual batteries begin to weaken, again comes the next Ramadan to give a full charge!



RAMADAN IS A SPECIAL MONTH

Moulana Maseehullah Khan (Rahimahullah)

In the month of Ramadan Allah Ta'ala has protected us from our routine of negligence and indifference. It is as if Allah Ta'ala is saying, 'O My Banda (slave)! Why are you so deeply engrossed with your farming? Submit yourself to My Door! O My Banda (slave)! Why are you rooted to your shop busy buying and selling (making you oblivious of your Creator)? Submit yourself to My Royal Court, to the Masjid! O My Banda (slave)! Why are you busy mending shoes and sewing clothes? Come to Me! Free yourself from everything and come to My Door!'

Allah Ta'ala has summoned us here in order to shower us with gifts. He has called us so that our sins may be forgiven. He has called us for the Islah (purification) of our hearts.

So let us submit ourselves entirely to our Creator instead of sitting in our shops and factories involving ourselves in hurling abuse at one another, and engaging in backbiting and fault-finding.

Here there is recitation of the Qur'an Shareef; the name of Allah Ta'ala is here; Tasbeeh is here; Durood Shareef is here; Istighfaar is here; optional Ibadah is here. What a great favour has Allah Ta'ala not bestowed on us that He has personally invited us to Him as special guests!

Allah Ta'ala has chained the Shayateen. These were the culprits that troubled and molested us the whole year through. They are the ones that misdirected us to various types of sins. Allah Ta'ala has saved us from them. The schemes and mischief of the Shayateen are such that to detect them is not within the capacity of every person. They cause a tremendous amount of grief and trouble but the Shayateen are terrified of the Mashaikh (Friends of Allah), and they flee from them.

Note: The above advice does not mean that one should completely divorce oneself from worldly obligations and duties. In essence, one should make maximum use of the opportunities in this auspicious month.



MESSAGE OF RAMADAN

Khalid Baig

We observe Ramadan every year. Do we also listen to it?

Ramadan is the most important month of our calendar. It is a tremendous gift from Allah in so many ways. In our current state of being down and out, it can uplift us, empower us, and turn around our situation individually and collectively. It is the spring season for the garden of Islam when dry grass can come back to life and flowers bloom. But these benefits are not promised for lifeless and thoughtless rituals alone. They will be ours if our actions are informed by the message of Ramadan.

Today the message of Ramadan tends to get drowned out by much louder voices of the pop culture that have an opposite message. We have become so accustomed to them that many of us remain enslaved to them even during Ramadan.

The most important message of Ramadan is that we are not just body. We are body and soul. And that what makes us human

beings and that determines our value as human beings is the soul and not the body. During Ramadan we deprive the body to uplift the soul. This is all simple and familiar. But we can understand its significance if we remember that the message of the materialistic hedonistic global pop culture that has engulfed every Muslim land today - just like the rest of the world - is exactly the opposite. It says that body is everything. That the materialistic world is all that counts. That the greatest happiness - if not virtue - is in filling the appetites of the body. This message produces endless appetites and consequently endless wars to fill those endless appetites through endless exploitation. It produces endless frustrations since the gap between desires and achievements can never be filled. It produces endless chaos and endless oppression. Yet this trash comes in such beautiful and enticing packages that we can hardly resist it. We equate this slavery with freedom. We consider this march to disaster as progress. And with every movement, we get further and deeper into the mire.

Ramadan is here to liberate us from all this. Here is a powerful message that it is soul over body. Take a break from the pop culture. Turn off the music and TV. Say goodbye to the endless and futile pursuit of happiness in sensory pleasures. Rediscover your inner self that has been buried deep under it. Reorient yourself. Devote your time to the reading of the Qur'an, to

voluntary worship, to prayers and conversations with Allah Ta'ala. Reflect on the direction of your life and your priorities. Reflect on and strengthen your relationship with your Creator.

On the last day of one Sha'ban, Rasulullah ﷺ delivered a sermon about the upcoming month of Ramadan. It is a very important sermon that we should carefully read before every Ramadan to prepare ourselves mentally for the sacred month. It begins:

"Oh people! A great month is coming to you. A blessed month. A month in which there is one night that is better than a thousand months. A month in which Allah has made it compulsory upon you to fast by day, and voluntary to pray by night. Whoever draws nearer to Allah by performing any of the voluntary good deeds in this month shall receive the same reward as is there for performing an obligatory deed at any other time. And whoever discharges an obligatory deed in this month shall receive the reward of performing seventy obligations at any other time. It is the month of Sabr (patience), and the reward for Sabr is Heaven. It is the month of kindness and charity. It is a month in which a believer's sustenance is increased. Whoever gives food to a fasting person to break his fast, shall have his sins forgiven, and he will be saved from the Fire of Hell, and he shall have the same reward as the fasting person, without the latter's reward being diminished at all."

The hadith continues and contains many other very important messages. However let us take the time to highlight two of the statements contained above. First, that Ramadan is the month of Sabr. The English translation is patience but that word has a very narrow meaning compared to Sabr. Sabr means not only patience and perseverance in the face of difficulties, it also means being steadfast in avoiding sin in the face of temptations and being persistent in performing virtues when that is not easy. Overcoming hunger and thirst during fasting is part of it. But protecting our eyes, ears, minds, tongues, and hands, etc. from all sins is also part of it. So is being persistent in doing good deeds as much as possible despite external or internal obstacles. Ramadan requires Sabr in its fullest sense and provides a training ground for that very important quality to be developed and nurtured. Here is a recipe for the complete overhaul of our life, not just a small adjustment in meal times.

The highest point of Ramadan is I'tikaf, an act of worship in which a person secludes himself in a Masjid to devote his time entirely to worshipping and remembering Allah. Some in every Muslim community must take a break and go to the Masjid for the entire last ten days of Ramadan. Others should imbibe the spirit and do whatever they can.

But we must differentiate between worldly pleasures and worldly responsibilities. We take a break from the former and not the latter. Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Abbas ؓ was performing I'tikaf, when a person came and sat down silently. Sensing his distressed condition Ibn Abbas ؓ enquired about his situation, learnt that he needed help, and proceeded to leave the Masjid to go out and help him. Now this action does nullify the I'tikaf, making a makeup obligatory. So the person, though grateful, was curious. Explaining his action, Ibn Abbas ؓ related a hadith that when a person makes efforts to help his brother, he earns the reward for performing I'tikaf for ten years.

This brings us to the second statement to consider: that Ramadan is the month of kindness and charity. With those in distress in the millions in the world today, the need for remembering this message of Ramadan cannot be overstated.

Unfortunately, today another scene seems to be dominant in some parts of the Muslim world. Here Ramadan is the month of celebrations, shopping, fancy iftars at posh restaurants, entertainment and gossip. People stay up at night but not for worship; they wile away that time watching TV or wandering in the bazaar. Ramadan here is more a month of feasting than fasting.

No one can take away our Ramadan from us; we just give it away ourselves. And if we realize the utter blunder we have made, we can take it back.





HOW TO SPEND RAMADAN

Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

The month of Ramadan is the season of divine blessings. It is the month of purification and meant for annual renovation of the inner spiritual qualities. It is a golden opportunity for every Muslim to strengthen his Imaan, purify his heart and soul and remove the evil effects of the sins committed. This month invites a Muslim to minimise his mundane involvements and maximise the acts of worship. One should plan his schedule for this month beforehand, so as to spare maximum time for Ibadah.

Below is a brief list of the acts which should be carried out in Ramadan with due care:

1. To offer every prayer with congregation in the Masjid.
2. To rise up a little earlier than the exact time of suhoor and to offer the Salaah of Tahajjud. There is no prescribed number of the Tahajjud prayer, yet, it is better to pray 8 Rakaat.

3. To offer the nafl (optional) prayers of Ishraaq (two Rakaat after sunrise), Dhuha (four Rakaat which may be performed at anytime after Ishraaq before noon) and Awwabeen (six Rakaat after Maghrib).
4. The recitation of the glorious Qur'an. No specific limit is prescribed, but one should recite as much as possible.
5. To remember Allah Ta'ala frequently through different prophetic recitations, such as the following: Subhanallahi wa bihamdihi subhanallahil Azeem, la hawla wala quwwata illa billahil aliyyil Azeem,- Subhanallah wal hamdulillah wa lailaha illallah wallahu Akbar, Astaghfirullah allazee la ilaha illa huwal hayyul qayyoom wa atoobu ilayhi, Allahumma sali ala muhammadinin nabiyyil ummiy wa ala aalihi wasallim tasleeman.

Apart from reciting these phrases, one hundred times each, at a particular time, they may also be continued frequently throughout the day, even if one is engaged in some light work, when walking and when in bed.

6. Prayers and supplications (Dua): No particular prayer is prescribed. One can pray for all one's needs, both in this world and in the Hereafter. However, the supplications of the noble

Rasulullah ﷺ are so comprehensive that they encompass all that a Muslim can need in his life and after his death. It is therefore, preferable to make Dua in words used by Rasulallah ﷺ.

There are several books wherein these prophetic supplications have been compiled. Below are the names of two books which should be kept by every Muslim in his home and be used for praying daily: Al-Hisnul Haseen by Allamah Al-Jazri and Munajat- e-Maqbool by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi.

7. Giving Sadaqah (charity): Apart from paying Zakaat, which is obligatory, one should also spend optionally in Ramadan to the best of one's ability. It is reported in authentic narrations that Rasulallah ﷺ used to pay special attention in Ramadan to look after the poor and help them financially. Therefore, a Muslim should give as much money in Sadaqah as one can afford.

What should be avoided in Ramadan

All sinful acts should be avoided completely during the month of Ramadan. Although the sinful acts are totally prohibited in the Shariah, whether in Ramadan or at any other time, but their prohibition becomes more severe in this month. It is evident that every Muslim avoids certain lawful acts, like eating and drinking

during the fasts. If he continues to commit sins, it will be a mockery to avoid lawful things and yet be engaged in unlawful acts that were never allowed in the Shariah. Thus, the abstinence from sins becomes all the more necessary in this month.

The following acts in particular, should be avoided:

1. Telling lies
2. Backbiting
3. Quarrelling

Rasulullah ﷺ has particularly forbidden us from quarrelling during fasting. He has directed us that, if someone wants to quarrel in Ramadan, we should tell him that we are fasting, hence we are not prepared to indulge in any quarrel.

4. Eating unlawful things
5. Earning through unlawful means
6. Any act which may harm a person
7. Burdening servants or employees with a toilsome job that is beyond their ability, without providing them facilities to carry it out.

In short, one should try to refrain from all kinds of sins and protect the eyes, ears, tongue, and all other organs from indulging in any unlawful activity.

Once a Muslim spends the month of Ramadan in this way, the person will be equipped with spiritual strength which will facilitate a good Islamic life in accordance with the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala throughout the year.

It is my sincere Dua that Allah make this Mubarak month bountiful for all Muslims and especially for my associates and bless them to obtain as much of its Barakah as possible and guide them according to the Sunnat and His wishes. I appeal to all gracious readers and all my associates to include me in their Isale Sawaab and Duas.



RAMADAN

A MONTH OF CLEANSING AND SEEDING

Maulana Muhammad Ameer

Ramadan is a month that benefits a believer tremendously. It is perhaps the shortest and simplest way to acquire nisbat (relationship, connection) with Allah Ta'ala. All forms of rewards and opportunities await a Muslim who is desirous of reformation and of acquiring proximity to Allah Ta'ala.

The exercises of Ramadan are such that they automatically establish a certain ability within a person to incline towards piety and virtue. Ordinary eating, drinking, sleeping and association is curtailed. These are factors that are generally the cause of arousing passions, lethargy and negligence. Curbing these elements makes one fresh and energetic. Through fasting, eating, drinking and carnal passions are kept in check.

With Suhoor, Taraweeh and Tahajjud, sleep is balanced and through I'tikaf (seclusion) one develops the ability to enjoy

proximity of Allah Ta'ala and is protected from the ill-effects of unnecessary association with people.

These exercises cleanse the inner-self and connect one with Allah Ta'ala. The heart is cleaned and prepared for cultivation. Cleaning the heart of the effects of overconsumption is necessary before the 'seeds' of Zikr, Quran recitation, Dua and good acts can be sown.

With the heart cleaned, the pure essence of Zikr and other acts of devotion will impact on the heart. When the ground is fertile and prepared for cultivation the produce will be lush and of a high quality. Similarly, the heart that is softened by these spiritual exercises will bear wonderful 'flowers' and results.

Once the cleansing is done, the 'seeding' begins. Through the optional acts of devotion like Tahajjud, Zikrullah, Nafil Salaah, recitation of the Quran, Sadqah etc., 'seeding' takes place. These beautiful acts of devotion are seeds that are sown in the 'garden of Taqwa - the clean and cultivated heart of a believer. These seeds will result in beautiful flowers.

In essence, Ramadan is a month in which we cleanse the heart of maladies and plant the seeds of Ibadah which results in one experiencing the beautiful fragrance and sweetness of Imaan

(faith). When this is acquired it should not be lost but enhanced by adhering to what was acquired through the blessings of Ramadan.

May Allah Ta'ala grant the Ummah a spiritually fruitful Ramadan.





RAMADAN THE MONTH OF CARING AND SHARING

Mufti Zubair Bayat

Ramadan - the ninth month of the Islamic calendar - is a special month of the year for Muslims.

Ramadan is a month of fasting from dawn to dusk, a time for additional prayers, charity, caring and sharing. Muslims regard it as an ideal time for spiritual rejuvenation. Ramadan is a time when Muslims concentrate on inner, spiritual development and spend less time on the mundane and material aspects of life. It is a time of worship and contemplation.

During the fast of Ramadan, strict restrictions are placed on the daily lives of Muslims. When fasting, no eating or drinking is allowed during the daylight hours. At the end of the day, at sunset, the fast is broken with a meal, called iftar, followed by the evening prayer. The fast is resumed before dawn of the next morning.

Benefits of fasting

Fasting for thirty days is the most important deed of Ramadan, and has many special benefits. Among these, the most important is that it is a means of developing will power and internal discipline. This is useful to withstand temptations, peer-pressure and other undesirable influences. The will power developed through fasting helps to resist the ever-menacing scourge of drugs, substance-abuse and anti-social behaviour. In addition, fasting helps one to feel compassion for those who are less fortunate and underprivileged, since each day a greater empathy with the poor is felt as a result of experiencing hunger and thirst first hand.

It also helps to enhance a higher level of God- consciousness and heightened spirituality. It offers a time for Muslims to develop a greater sense of humility, compassion and community bonding. A greater sense of generosity and forgiveness is also characteristic of this time. Huge amounts are contributed in charity in this month in a bid to eradicate poverty and alleviate the suffering of the poor.

As a secondary goal, fasting is also beneficial to the health and provides a break in the cycle of bad eating habits and overindulgence. It provides an excellent detox program for the preceding eleven months of indulgence.

The Quran and nightly prayers

The Month of Ramadan is the month of revelation of the Holy Quran. The Quran states: "Ramadan is the month when the Qur'an was sent down from heaven, guidance unto mankind". During

Ramadan, it is common for Muslims to spend longer hours at a local Mosque, reciting and studying the Quran. In addition to the five daily prayers, during Ramadan, a special additional prayer called the Taraweeh prayer (Night Prayer) is conducted. This prayer is fairly long as the entire Quran is recited in this prayer, with approximately 1 part of the 30 parts of the Qur'an being recited in this prayer, so that the entire scripture is recited in the course of the month. In the last ten nights of this month, Muslims search for a special night called Laylatul Qadr (the Night of Power).

End of Ramadan

The month of fasting finally concludes with the festival of breaking of the fast, called Eid. The Day of Eid is a day of joy and thanksgiving. Dressed in their best of clothing and applying perfume, Muslims head early in the morning for a huge congregational prayer in an open field. After the prayer, Muslims greet each other with the greeting

of “Eid Mubarak” which means Happy Eid! The Eid prayer is followed by a compulsory charity called Fitrah that has to be gifted to the poor by the wealthy so that all may enjoy on the Day of Eid. The rest of the day is spent socialising, enjoying family meals together, visiting relatives, friends, the ill and the less fortunate. Gifts are shared and as a token of love, children are given a special gift called Eidi. We take this opportunity to wish all Muslims a wonderful Ramadan and a happy Eid!





RAMADAN LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Patel

You have been given an opportunity of a lifetime. A business operates twenty four hours a day. The owner wishes to take a holiday and has requested you to run the business for one month. The arrangement is that for every second that you will personally man the business, you will get paid twenty Rands. If you have to leave the business for any necessity, the person who relieves you will get the money for the duration of time that you are out! You have obviously grabbed the opportunity with open arms.

Over-time

First let the above scenario settle in the mind. Now imagine that the month of running the business

has just commenced. A close friend phones to invite you to a lavish function. "You must come," he urges. Your almost spontaneous reply would perhaps be: "I am sorry but I am very busy and will not be able to attend." The first weekend comes.

Your children want to "go out for a drive." "Not today. I am very busy," says their father. The children's mother also wholeheartedly agrees. After all she is also dreaming every night about what she will do with the twenty Rands per second that her husband is earning. Hence she does not ask to be taken anywhere. How can she even think of it. Twenty Rands per second — and just for one month only! And you ... well obviously you are working beyond the limits of overtime. No time to eat in peace. Only the minimal amount of sleep. No shopping. No "drives." No time to sit around with friends over coffee. And entertainment? Whatever is that? The very word sounds unfamiliar. All this due to the once in a lifetime opportunity of earning twenty Rands per second for one month.

Answer on the day of judgement

Yet, if the person who slogged for the entire month to earn twenty Rands per second ... passes away on the thirtieth day, the wealth he earned will be of no use to him. He cannot take it along to his grave. If he does live to use it, the tax-man will be there to first take his share. He will have to worry about how to protect his wealth. Besides this, he will have to answer on the Day of Judgement about how he earned it and where he spent it. Generally, despite the abovementioned problems we will grab the opportunity of running the business for one month.

Petty cash

Allah Ta'ala is also granting us a lifetime's opportunity. The month of Ramadan with its unlimited blessings is here. One month in earnings at the rate of twenty Rands per second cannot even be called petty cash in comparison to the rewards that Allah Ta'ala grants and the blessings and mercy that He showers in the month of Ramadan. Every Ramadan must be treated as a once in a lifetime opportunity since we have no idea whether we will live till the next Ramadan.

What are the rewards of good deeds in the month of Ramadan? The reward of every Fardh (compulsory) act is multiplied seventy times while every Nafil (optional) act earns the reward of one Fardh out of Ramadan. It is important to understand the latter aspect in its proper perspective. Tahajjud (Nafil Salaah in the last third of the night) is an extremely great Ibadah. Great virtues have been narrated for this Salaah. However, a lifetime of Tahajjud cannot equal one Fardh of Fajr Salaah! Yet in the month of Ramadan Allah Ta'ala grants us the reward of a Fardh action for every Nafil performed.

Entertainment

Thus, can we afford to waste this time? Can we still have time for "drives?" Is it possible for a person who values Ramadan in a similar manner that he values twenty Rands a second, to spend hours "eating out" at after Taraweeh feasts, or have time for other idle pursuits? Can we afford to spend valuable time glued to the airwaves listening to the "opinions" and "views" of all and sundry in Deeni matters whereas that time could have been used to at least recite Durood Shareef? And entertainment? Have we heard that word before??? Thus the last thing that any Muslim who values Ramadan will bother about is who somewhere in the world is whacking a little red ball all over a field or who is kicking a ball between two posts!!!

Shortest Taraweeh

Thus it also does not behove of people who value Ramadan to try to "save time" from the performance of Ibadah. Many people "work out" the shortest Taraweeh — where they will be able to leave in the shortest possible time and head for the food outlets where ample time will be whiled away. Think of the twenty Rands per second. We would break the records for over-time work. Thus in Ramadan we should break the record for the amount of time

spent in Salaah, Tilawat (recitation of the Qur'an Shareef), Zikr, Dua, etc. Ramadan is not a month to "save" time from the performance of these acts. Rather it is a month to engage every moment possible in these acts. Apart from Salaah, Tilawat, etc., Rasulullah ﷺ has himself stressed upon us to excessively engage in some practices.

Rasulullah ﷺ is reported to have said: "And in this month you should endeavour to perform four things in great number, two of which shall be to please your Rabb, while the other two shall be those without which you cannot make do. Those which shall be to please your Rabb are that you should in great abundance recite the "Kalima Tayyiba" (Laa ilaaha il'lallah) and make much Istighfaar (beg Allah's forgiveness with Astaghfirullah). And as for those two without which you cannot make do, you should beg Allah for entry into paradise and seek refuge with him from the fire of Jahannam."

One month

While one should engage to the maximum in the above good deeds, the purpose of Ramadan must be kept foremost in mind, which is to acquire Taqwa (Allah-awareness and piety). Thus together with the maximum amount of righteous actions one

must totally refrain from all sins. One month of strictly conducting oneself in this manner will Insha Allah have the effect of enabling one to live the next eleven months in a similar manner — in the complete obedience of Allah Ta'ala.

May Allah Ta'ala enable us to appreciate and value the month of Ramadan — more than what we value twenty Rands per second.





THE NIGHT OF QADR

Seize The Opportunity!

Maulana Muhammad Ameer

Great opportunities in life do not present themselves always. So when an opportunity does arrive it is only sensible and intelligent to embrace the opportunity fully and reap its benefits.

The Night of Qadr represents the sheer Power, Might and Forgiveness of Allah Ta'ala. It appears but once a year with the opportunity to earn forgiveness and a phenomenal reward of more than 80 years of dedicated worship to one's Creator. Such an opportunity can only be regarded as a special bounty from a Most Loving and Generous Creator to His undeserving subjects. Allah Ta'ala gives without measure and is willing to forgive and bestow His choicest favours upon those who seek them.

This massive opportunity will avail itself in the odd nights of Ramadan and it is for all believers regardless of nationality, race or location. Despite the individual and collective proliferation of sin

committed in the year, there is no obstacle on this night. Allah Ta'ala is prepared to forgive all and elevate a person towards His proximity.

It should not be that we are engaged in frivolities, debates, arguments, hanging out or any other form of un-mindfulness that will deprive us of this tremendous opportunity. These are nights when we can free our souls from the grips of vice, and bring about a total change and reformation in our hearts. We can release ourselves from the misery of sin, free our hearts of hatred, malice, jealousy, pride, love for the world and all other contaminants that dirty the heart. Missing out on the favours of this great night will be an immeasurable loss and a sign of ungratefulness to the mercy and favours of our most Kind Allah.

For a few nights of our life let us change the pattern, and focus our attention to what could be a most rewarding and life-changing experience. After all, trends that are set in Ramadan are generally the trends that will remain with us after the month has past. The ball is firmly in our court and we will have none to blame but ourselves if we deprive our souls of the opportunity. If one obtains the blessings of the Night of Qadr and is emancipated from the fire, then after Ramadan one will have gained the courage and strength to live life on the path of guidance and obedience to Allah Ta'ala.

Allah says, “Verily we have revealed the message in the Night of Power, and what will explain to you what the Night of Power is, the night of power is greater than a thousand months, in it descend the Angels and the Spirit (Angel Jibraeel) with the permission of their Creator with all decrees, peace it is till the rising of the dawn.” (Surah Qadr)

Rasulullah ﷺ said: “Whoever prays during the Night of Qadr with faith and hoping for reward will have all of his previous sins forgiven” (Bukhari)

We ask Allah Ta'ala to bless us with the bounty of Laylatul Qadr and emancipate us, our parents and the Ummah from the Fire. Aameen.



I'TIKAF

How To Spend The Time Profitably

Maulana Muhammad Farooq (Rahimahullah)

It is observed that people do not spend their time constructively during I'tikaf. Others wish to do so, but do not have any idea what to do.

The following practices during I'tikaf have been recommended by Shafeequl Ummah Moulana Muhammad Farooq Saheb (Rahimahullah) and serves as a guide for those in I'tikaf. This programme was adhered to when Hazrat performed I'tikaf in Darul Uloom Zakariyya, South Africa in 1998/9. It should be noted that this is a suggested format and maybe adapted according to one's circumstances.

Maghrib

Perform six Rakaat of Awwabeen

- One tasbeeh of 3rd Kalima after meals

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Esha

- After Taraweeh
- Read an Islamic book like Virtues of Ramadan, Hayatul Muslimeen, Jaza-ul- Aamal, Adabul Mu'asharat, Shauwq Watan, etc.
- Khatm-e-Khwajghan thereafter, which is an accepted congregational practice of our illustrious Mashaikh
- Method of Khatm-e-Khwajghan : Recite Durood 11 times and thereafter read 360 times:

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ

- Surah Alam Nashrah 360 times with Bismillah

- then 360 times

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ

- Recite Durood Shareef 11 times – Collective Dua

*****SHORT BREAK*****

- After refreshing oneself, perform fresh Wudhu and perform two Rakaat of Tahiyatul Wudhu.

- Complete the twelve Tasbeeh Zikr with the intention of Allah Ta'ala's love or Zikr as prescribed by one's Shaikh. Thereafter fervent Dua.

Before sleeping

- Recite one Tasbeeh of 3rd Kalimah

Muhasabah: To ponder over all your actions done from the time you woke up until night time, to make Shukr (offer thanks to Allah Ta'ala) for the good actions and to make Dua to be given Taufeeq (ability) to do more, and to have regret over any wrongdoing or inappropriate act

Muraqaba-e-Maut: To meditate about death – the pangs of death, questioning in the grave, the day of Judgment, standing before Allah Ta'ala, accounting for our deeds and passage over the bridge. Ponder over these things and make a firm pledge never to go near sin again

Thereafter recite 100 times Istighfar as follows :

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

Thereafter sleep in accordance with the Sunnat

Morning

- Awake early
- Perform 4 or 8 Rakaat of Tahajjud
- Partake of Suhoor

Fajr Salah

- To recite Surah Fatiha (Alhamdulillahi Rabbil Alameen) commencing with Bismillah 41 times between the Sunnats of Fajr and the Fardh Salah. If a person does not find enough time between the Sunnats and the Fardh Salah, then read it after the Fajr Salah. This is a tried and tested prescription with great effect

After Fajr

- Recite Surah Yaseen
- Recite Surah Ikhlas 12 times and send the reward to the soul of Rasulullah ﷺ and the souls of the Ummah
- Recite Durood Shareef till Ishraq and send the reward to the soul of Rasulullah ﷺ and to the souls of the Ummah

- Perform 4 Rakaat Ishraq Salah and then rest
- Wake up an hour before Zawal. Perform Chasht Salah of 4, 8 or 12 Rakaat. Thereafter recite some portion of the Quran.

Sunnats of Zawal

- Perform 4 Rakaat after Zawal, before the Sunnahs of Zuh

After Zuh

- Taleem of one of the above-mentioned Kitabs – thereafter rest - awaken ½ hour before Asr and prepare for Salaah

After Asar

- Tilawah of the Qur'an Kareem, 1 manzil (part) of the Munajat-e-Maqbool, Hizbul Bahr and Dua before Iftar

General advices

- Be particular about occupying the 1st saff and performing Salah with Takbeer Ula (first Takbeer)
- Remain in Zikr and do not be negligent
- Maintain the etiquette and respect of the Masjid at all times

- Make Shukr and be grateful for the ability to perform good acts and ask for continued guidance
- Do all actions with sincerity and devotion
- Speak only when necessary
- Focus that Allah is watching me and I am in His house

Practices for Jumuah

- Recite a Surah from the Musabbihat, i.e. any Surah starting with “Sabbaha” e.g. Surah A'la (No. 87)
- Recite Surah Kahf
- Perform Salatut Tasbeeh
- Be early in the Masjid from 1st Azan and perform two Rakaat Tahiyatul Masjid
- Recite 70 times

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

- 70 times

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِي بِحَلَالِكَ عَنْ حَرَامِكَ، وَأَغْنِنِي بِفَضْلِكَ عَمَّنْ سِوَاكَ

- 70 times *Ayatul Kursi*
- Read 1000 Durood
- After Asr before waking up from one's place read the 80 Duroods mentioned in the Hadith
- Fervent Dua before sunset

One should remember his parents, teachers, Mashaikh, family and the entire Ummah in his Duas.

May Allah accept the I'tikaf of one and all and make it a means of our salvation and entry into Jannah.





USEFUL HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR RAMADAN

Dr. Farouk Hafejee

This article provides useful advice on how to avoid some common problems encountered in Ramadan. If followed, it would enable one to fast comfortably and enjoy fully the spiritual benefits of Ramadan.

During the holy month of Ramadan, our diet should not differ very much from our normal diet and should be as simple as possible. The diet should be such that we maintain our normal weight, neither losing nor gaining. However, if one is over-weight, Ramadan is an ideal time to normalise one's weight.

In view of the long hours of fasting, we should consume slow digesting foods including fibre

containing-foods rather than fast-digesting foods. Slow digesting foods last up to 8 hours, while fast- digesting foods last for only 3 to 4 hours.

- Slow-digesting foods are foods that contain grains and seeds like barley, wheat, oats, millet, semolina, beans, lentils,
- wholemeal flour, unpolished rice, etc. (called complex carbohydrates).
- Fast-burning foods are foods that contain sugar, white flour, etc. (called refined carbohydrates).
- Fibre-containing foods are bran-containing foods, whole wheat, grains and seeds, vegetables like green beans, peas, sem (papry), marrow, mealies, spinach, and other herbs like methie, the leaves of beetroot (iron-rich), fruit with skin, dried fruit especially dried apricots, figs and prunes, almonds, etc.

The foods eaten should be well-balanced, containing foods from each food group, i.e. fruits, vegetables, meat/chicken/fish, bread/cereals and dairy products. Fried foods are unhealthy and should be limited. They cause indigestion, heart- burn, and weight problems.

Avoid

- Fried and fatty foods.

- Foods containing too much sugar.
- Over-eating especially at sehri.
- Too much tea at sehri. Tea makes you pass more urine taking with it valuable mineral salts that your body would need during the day.
- Smoking cigarettes. If you cannot give up smoking, cut down gradually starting a few weeks before Ramadan. Smoking is unhealthy and one should stop completely.

Eat

- Complex carbohydrates at sehri so that the food lasts longer making you less hungry.
- Haleem is an excellent source of protein and is a slow-burning food.
- Dates are excellent source of sugar, fibre, carbohydrates, potassium and magnesium.
- Almonds are rich in protein and fibre with less fat.
- Bananas are a good source of potassium, magnesium and carbohydrates.

Drink

- As much water or fruit juices as possible between iftar and bedtime so that your body may adjust fluid levels in time.

Constipation

Constipation can cause piles (haemorrhoids), fissures (painful cracks in anal canal) and indigestion with a bloated feeling.

Causes: Too much refined foods, too little water and not enough fibre in the diet.

Remedy: Avoid excessive refined foods, increase water intake, use bran in baking, brown flour when making roti.

Indigestion & wind

Causes: Over-eating. Too much fried and fatty foods, spicy foods, and foods that produce wind e.g. eggs, cabbage, lentils, carbonated drinks like Cola also produce gas.

Remedy: Do not over-eat, drink fruit juices or better still drink water. Avoid fried foods, add ajmor to wind-producing foods.

Lethargy ('low blood pressure')

Excessive sweating, weakness, tiredness, lack of energy, dizziness, especially on getting up from sitting position, pale appearance and feeling faint are symptoms associated with "low blood pressure". This tends to occur towards the afternoon.

Causes: Too little fluid intake, decreased salt intake.

Remedy: Keep cool, increase fluid and salt intake. Caution: Low blood pressure should be confirmed by taking a blood pressure reading when symptoms are present. Persons with high blood pressure may need their medication adjusted during Ramadan. They should consult their doctor.

Headache

Causes: Caffeine and tobacco-withdrawal, doing too much in one day, lack of sleep, hunger usually occur as the day goes by and worsens at the end of the day. When associated with "low blood pressure", the headache can be quite severe and can also cause nausea before Iftar.

Remedy: Cut down caffeine and tobacco slowly starting a week or two before Ramadan. Herbal and caffeine-free teas may be substituted. Re-organise your schedule during the Ramadan so as to have adequate sleep.

Low blood sugar

Weakness, dizziness, tiredness, poor concentration, perspiring easily, feeling shaky (tremor), unable to perform physical activities, headache, palpitations are symptoms of low blood sugar.

Causes in non-diabetics: Having too much sugar i.e. refined carbohydrates especially at Suhur. The body produces too much insulin causing the blood glucose to drop.

Remedy: Eat something at Suhur and limit sugar- containing foods and drinks.

Caution: Diabetics may need to adjust their medication in Ramadan, consult your doctor.

Muscle cramps

Causes: Inadequate intake of calcium, magnesium and potassium foods.

Remedy: Eat foods rich in the above minerals e.g. vegetables, fruit, dairy products, meat and dates. **Caution:** Those on high blood pressure medication and with kidney stone problems should consult their doctor.

Peptic ulcers, Heart burn, Gastritis and Hiatus hernia

Increased acid levels in the empty stomach in Ramadan aggravate the above conditions. It presents as a burning feeling in the stomach area under the ribs and can extend up to the throat.

Spicy foods, coffee, and Cola drinks worsen these conditions.

Medications are available to control acid levels in the stomach. People with proven peptic ulcers and hiatus hernia should consult their doctor well before Ramadan.

Kidney stones

Kidney stones may occur in people who have less liquids to drink. Therefore, it is essential to drink extra liquids so as to prevent stone formation.

Joint pains

Causes: During Ramadan, when extra Salaah are performed the pressure on the knee joints increases. In the elderly and those with arthritis this may result in pain, stiffness, swelling and discomfort.

Remedy: Lose weight so that the knees do not have to carry any

extra load. Exercise the lower limbs before Ramadan so that they can be prepared for the additional strain. Being physically fit allows greater fulfilment, thus enabling one to be able to perform Salah with ease.





AFTER RAMADAN

Maulana Yunus Patel (Rahimahullah)

The Holy month of Ramadan came like seasonal rain and passed by. This rain did not water the plants and crops -it showered upon the hearts of believers. It is sad, but true, that the hearts of the majority of Muslims are stricken with spiritual drought and spiritual decadence. It is a drought caused by excessive indulgence in un-Islamic activities, immoral behaviour, unjust actions, unfair dealings etc. Drought caused by lack of rain destroys crops -drought caused by lack of piety, lack of fear of Allah and lack of Allah consciousness destroys the SPIRITUALITY of the heart.

Ramadan's spiritual rains brought to life the Masajid and other prayer places. Ramadan had fanned the dying spark of charity .Ramadan had awakened the dying spirit of tolerance, patience and sympathy for the less fortunate.

Now that we come to the end of Ramadan the big question is what to do? Did we go through all the spiritual exercises in

Ramadan in order that we may have the freedom to indulge, on Eid day, in all types of immoral, shameless and indecent amusement? Did we restrain ourselves from halaal food, drinks and other pleasures from dawn to sunset throughout Ramadan, so that we may return with renewed vigour to gambling, drinking, adultery and fornication? Will the spirit of tolerance, mercy, patience, charity and sympathy be still evident or will these noble qualities be shelved until the dawn of the next Ramadan?

Will the Masajid which were filled on most nights in Ramadan remain the same or will they become empty wondering where the faithful have gone? Our lifestyles after Ramadan will show whether we used the month to bring about a total reformation within ourselves or are we going to waste the valuable opportunity.

The National and international position of the Muslim communities leaves much to be desired. Muslims are lamenting the loss of lives, destruction of property, oppression, tyranny, injustice and a host of other problems all over the world. They are wondering why the promised help of Allah to the believers is nowhere in sight. Just one glance into the lifestyles of the overwhelming majority of the Muslims is sufficient to answer the question. Millions

of Muslims do not have much to their credit besides Muslim names.

Allah's help comes with action and Islamic qualities -not with names or faces - Arabs or non-Arabs, African or European, Chinese or Indians. On the other hand every group, organization, society or individual who talks Islam, seems to have got its own brand of Islam. The Islamic teachings which were left behind for us, crystal clear and pristine pure, have become so adulterated with foreign customs, alien practices and un- Islamic ideologies, that a new Muslim has to make an effort to search for the Quran and Sunnah brand of Islam or remain confused and ignorant.

May Allah Ta'ala on the occasion of Eid give us the guidance to resolve that we shall make the Quran and Sunnah our guiding lights and practice Islam as much as possible. If the non-Muslim inhabitants of our country see Islam in the lives of Muslims, they will not require much persuasion to accept our beautiful Deen.



A SUGGESTED TIMETABLE FOR RAMADAN

To draw maximum benefit from this this glorious month, one should endeavour to follow a set routine or timetable.

Below is a practical suggested routine that one could adopt in Ramadan.

1. Suhoor

Partake of the early morning meal. This is a Sunnah practice that contains abundant blessings and rewards. Rasulullah ﷺ said, "Eat suhoor, because in it lie great blessings." (Bukhari, Muslim)

2. Tahajjud

Plan your time in such a way that you are able to perform 4 to 8 Rakaat of Tahajjud Salaah and make Dua during this auspicious time. Rasulullah ﷺ has said that the Dua in the darkness of the night (after performing Tahajjud) is readily accepted by Allah.

(Tirmizi)

3. Fajr

Fajr Salaah should be performed with congregation for men. Ladies should perform their Salaah at home. Participate in the lesson or talk conducted in the Masjid and make intention to seek beneficial knowledge.

4. Ishraq

Avoid sleeping immediately after Fajr. Use this time for Quran recitation and Zikr till sunrise and about 15-20 minutes after sunrise perform 4 Rakaat Ishraq. One may sleep or rest thereafter.

5. Sunnat of Duha and Zawal

When the sun is brightly up in the sky perform 4 Rakaat Duha Salaah and before Zawal, perform 4 Rakaat Sunnat of Zawal.

6. Zuhr

Perform Zuhr Salaah with congregation. If possible, engage in some Zikr and Quran recitation and have a short rest with the intention of the afternoon sleep which is Sunnah.

7. Asar

Perform Asar with congregation for males. The time between Asar and Maghrib is very valuable especially for Quran, Zikr and Dua – If possible remain in the Masjid till Maghrib. The time close to Iftaar is a time for acceptance of Duas – engage in fervent Dua. Sisters should not lose this valuable the time between Asar and Maghrib in the kitchen. Allocate time for Dua in this time.

8. Maghrib

After performing Maghrib, perform 6 Rakaat of Awwabeen after the two Sunnat of Maghrib.

Before or after meals read from Virtues of Ramadan by Shaykhul Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya (Rahimahullah) for at least 5 minutes. Prepare for Esha and Taraweeh.

9. Esha

Perform Esha and Taraweeh in congregation. The 20 Rakaat Taraweeh prayer is an emphasised Sunnah for males and females. Sisters should perform Taraweeh after Esha at home.

10. After Taraweeh

Avoid wasting time and hanging out with friends etc. If there is a program in the Masjid then attend it and return home. At home, engage in some Zikr, Dua, Quran recitation and then go to sleep with the intention of waking up for Tahajjud and Suhoor.

In Ramadan we should develop the habit of attending the various programmes taking place in the Masjid conducted by our Ulama. By listening to these programmes and sitting in the company of the Ulama and the pious, change will definitely occur in our hearts and we will continue with this learning spirit after Ramadan.

Adequate rest should be taken in order to conserve energy for the compulsory actions. There is no point in doing abundant optional acts that result in tiredness and laziness at the time of obligatory actions. Fix the time for rest and sleep and include it in the timetable.

May Allah Ta'ala guide us to maximise the benefits of this month and grant us acceptance and forgiveness, emancipation from the fire and entry into paradise.





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أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا
WELCOME

About Darul Ihsan

Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre provides education, guidance, social, empowerment and welfare services to the community. In providing this service, we adopt a holistic approach, that gives due importance to basic needs as well as human rights and dignity of those that we serve.

Founding Philosophy

Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre is a multi-purpose, humanitarian-services providing organisation. 'Ihsan' means compassion towards mankind and to act with excellence. The Centre was established in the year 2000 with the primary objective of serving humanity and alleviating poverty and hardship locally and abroad. Since its inception, it has developed and established many humanitarian projects and provides a variety of free services to the community.

Key Objectives

One of the key objectives of the Centre is to promote a better understanding of humanity and peace, thereby serving as a bridge-builder between faiths and communities. Through guidance, Ubuntu and empowerment, the organisation hopes to train and develop the youth to become torch bearers of hope, peace and compassion to humanity.

