

In the Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, Most Merciful

## Islamic topics- Miscellaneous topics- lesson (74): Ramadan is the month of repentance and forgiveness

### Important introductory points

#### 1–Ramadan is an intensive course for the whole year:

Dear brother, Ramadan's lessons are related to this month, and Ramadan is the month of fasting which is the second largest act of worship in Islam. It is an intensive course that lasts for thirty days so that Allah may forgive us for the sins we have committed before Ramadan. It is worth mentioning here that whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan will have all his previous sins forgiven. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said in an authentic hadith:

**"Whoever fasts during Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from Allah, will have his past sins forgiven and whoever prays during the nights in Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven."**

[Agreed upon]

#### 2 –Sins forgiven in Ramadan are those committed with respect to Allah:



Sins committed against others are not forgiven.

However, lest we be under illusion, and since the bitter truth is a thousand times better than the tranquilizing illusion, we should know that the sins which are forgiven in Ramadan, in hajj, and after sincere repentance are exclusively those committed with respect to Allah. On the other hand, sins committed as regards sh3er (when you violate other people's rights) will not be forgiven except by re-payment or forgiveness (except when you restore people's rights to them or they forgive you). Therefore, Allah the Almighty says:

**"He (Allah) will forgive you of your sins-"**

(Al-Ahqaf, 46:31)

The phrase "of your sins" means the part of sins that man has committed with respect to His Lord; they will be forgiven in Ramadan, while sins committed between man and sh3er will not be forgiven, even if he is a martyr.

**"All the sins of a shahid (martyr) are forgiven except debt."**

[Narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad, and Sahih Muslim from Ibn 'Amr]

**3–The rights of Allah's servants are based on demanding (them):**

The rights of sh3er are based on demanding them (they demand your granting them), while the rights of Allah are based on forgiveness. Actually, there is a big difference between the two kinds of rights. Let not he who has an old debt, or owes something to sh3er, or has an obligation towards one of his relatives, think that when Ramadan comes Allah will forgive him all his faults! Only those you have committed with respect to Allah are forgiven in Ramadan, while sins you have committed as regards sh3er are not forgiven except when you restore those rights or when they forgive you for them.

Accordingly, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

**"There are three kinds of sins: the unforgivable sin, which is shirk (associating sh3er with Allah); a sin that cannot be passed over,**

**which is the one as regards the sh3er; and the forgivable sin, which is the one committed with respect to Allah."**

[Narrated by Tabaraani from Salman]



So:

**"Whoever performs hajj, during which he neither has sexual intercourse (with his wife) nor commits sins, will return (as sinless) as a newborn child on the very day his mother delivered him."**

[Narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad, Sahih Bukhari, An-Nassai and Ibn Majah from Abu Hurayra]

This is as regards the sins committed with respect to Allah:

**"Whoever fasts during Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from Allah, will have his past sins forgiven."**

And also:

**"Whoever prays during the nights in Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from Allah, will have his past sins forgiven."**

The above applies to the sins with respect to Allah, while those as regards the sh3er are not passed over. That is why the Noble Prophet, on entering the house of one of his righteous Companions who had just died, and before praying for him, asked:

**"Does he owe money to anyone?' They said: "Yes, he does. "Supplicate for your Companion", and he didn't pray for him, till one of the Companions said: "O Messenger of Allah, I will pay off**

his debt." So the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, prayed for him. The next day the Messenger of Allah asked the man who had volunteered to pay off the debt: "Have you paid the debt off?" He said: "Not yet." On the following day he repeated the same question and the man gave the same answer. On the following day he asked the man again and the man answered in the affirmative. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Now his skin has cooled down".

[Narrated by Ahmad from Jabir]

### Imaginary calming illusion

Dear brother, it is common for Muslims to have a false illusion that whoever fasts in Ramadan will be forgiven for all his past sins, while the truth is that only the sins committed with respect to Allah are forgiven, while people's rights must be restored. Allah the Almighty says:

**"Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it."**

(Al-Zalzala, 99:7-8)

Once a Bedouin came to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said:

**"O Messenger of Allah, advise me but don't make it too long." The Prophet said: "Say I believe in Allah, then stand firm on His orders." The Bedouin said: "I want something easier than this, it is too hard." The Prophet said: "Then prepare yourself for trials."**

These accurate words mean that if you do not want to follow Allah's orders then get ready for afflictions.

**"There is no stumbling, twitching in a vein, or scratching by a thorn except because of your sins, and the sins that are forgiven by Allah are more than that."**

[Narrated by Ibn Asaker from Bara]

Another Bedouin came to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said: "O Messenger of Allah, advise me, and do not elaborate." The Prophet reauthored to him the ayah:

**"Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it!  
And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it."**

(Al-Zalzala, 99:7-8)

The Bedouin said: "It is enough for me", then the Prophet, peace be upon him said:

**"This man shows comprehensive understanding",**  
which means he became a faqih (scholar in fiqh).

## Rites of adoration and righteous deeds

### 1–Condition for accepting the rites of adoration:

Dear brother, what is important is that Allah the Almighty accepts your righteous deeds. Verily, acts of adoration such as fasting, salah, and hajj are not considered adequate or accepted unless your dealings with other people are correct, and the proof of that is that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

**"Do you know who the bankrupt are?" They said: "The one without money or properties is bankrupt." So the Prophet said: "The bankrupt are those from my nation who will come on the Day of Resurrection with salah, fasting, and zakat, but also with insulting, slandering, consuming wealth, shedding blood, and beating sh3er. They (the abused) will each be given from his (the abuser's) good deeds; if his good deeds run out before the score is settled, their bad deeds (of the abused) will be cast upon him, then he will be thrown into the Fire."**

[Narrated by Muslim from Abu Hurayra]

Who is the bankrupt? He is the one who performs his prayers but does not follow Allah's orders obediently.

**"On the Day of Resurrection, men will be brought (to the Fire).  
Despite the fact that their righteous deeds will be as many as the**

**Mountain Tihama is high, Allah will scatter them into floating particles of dust." The Companions said: "O Messenger of Allah describe them to us." He said: "They prayed as you do; and prayed during the night as you do; but they violated the sacred limits of Allah when they were alone."**

[Sunan Ibn Majah from Thauban]

So:

**"Salah is the pillar of the deen of Islam."**

[Narrated by al-Bayhaqi in Shub Al-Iman from Omar]

Provided that you stand firm on His instructions.

**"Verily, those who say: Our Lord is Allah (Alone), and then they istaqamu (stand firm and steadfast)... "**

(Fussilat 41:30)

**"But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness..."**

(An-Nisa, 4:57)

### **An example of a believing shepherd:**

The son of sayyidina Umar (Abdullah bin Umar) wanted to test the faith of a shepherd. He said to him: "Let me buy this sheep, and take its price." The shepherd answered that he did not own it. Abdullah said: "Say to its owner that it has died, or a wolf has eaten it." The believing shepherd answered: "By Allah, I am in desperate need for this money, and if I say to its owner that it has died, or a wolf has eaten it, he will believe me, because he believes and trusts me. But if I did so, then where is Allah?!"

So this shepherd, despite his limited knowledge about Islam, grasped the essence of this deen.

## Ahadith about the effect of righteous deeds on rites of adoration

### The first hadith:

**"O Messenger of Allah, such and such woman has the reputation of praying and fasting a lot, and giving frequently sadaqah, but she hurts her neighbours with her tongue quite often." He said: "She will go to Hell."**

[Narrated by Ahmad and al-Bazzar from Abu Hurayra]

### The second hadith:



**"A woman entered the (Hell) Fire because of a cat which she had tied, neither giving it food nor setting it free to eat from the vermin of the earth."**

[Agreed upon from Ibn 'Umar]

So, ritual acts of worship like salah are not considered adequate and are not accepted unless we behave and act correctly, because:

### The third hadith:

**"To give up one danek (a silver coin weighing 0.496 gram) of illicit money is better than performing hajj eighty times after having performed the obligatory hajj."**

## The fourth hadith

**"Allah will not care for any of the deeds of whoever has no fear that prevents him from disobeying Allah when alone."**

[Narrated by al-Dailami from Anas]

## The fifth hadith:

**"Two rak'ahs from a pious man are better than a thousand from he who mixes deeds."**

[Narrated by Al-Shirazi and Al-Bayhaqi from Anas]

Which means mixing a deed that is righteous with another that is evil.

## A true story

An imam in London was appointed to a new destination on the outskirts of the city, and so he drove there every day with the same taxi driver. One day, after getting into the car, he paid his fare with a banknote of a very high denomination, and the driver gave him his change. When the imam counted it, he found that he was given twenty pence more than was his due, and initially intended to give it back to the driver. But after he had sat down, an evil thought, a whisper from shaytan, came into his mind. He said to himself that this transportation company was a real giant, and its profits were enormous, while the money in question was very little indeed, and he needed it badly, so there was no harm if he took it. But before he got out of the vehicle, he put his hand in his pocket spontaneously, took out the twenty pence and gave them back to the driver. The driver smiled, and said: "Are you not the imam at this mosque?" He said that he was and then the driver said: "By Allah, I was considering going to your mosque two days ago in order to worship Allah there and learn about Islam, but I wanted to test you before I did that. Hearing that, the imam was so shocked that he fainted because he had perceived the gravity of the crime he was on the point of committing. When he came to, he said: "O My Lord, I was about to sell the whole Islam for twenty pence" (he was about to lose his faith because of twenty pence).

## The importance of piety for self-discipline

Why was one Noble Companion equal to a thousand men? And a thousand men like us are useless? Because they were pious, and never transgressed the limits ordained by Allah. As regards the salah, without



being pious, you will not be close to Allah the Almighty (while performing it).

**"Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their salah with all humility and full submissiveness."**

(Al-Muminun, 23:1-2)

Verily, salah, as Allah the Almighty describes it, is:

**"And truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for al-khashi'un."**

(Al-Baqarah)

Al- khashi' is the one who obeys Allah truly so that his entire heart submits to Him.

Now, in regard to fasting:

**"Whoever does not give up false speech and acting by it; then Allah is not in need of him abandoning his food and drink."**

[Narrated by Bukhari, Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah from Abu Hurayra]

## The wisdom behind fasting

What is Allah's wisdom behind fasting?

### - The first wisdom:

To feel that we are in need of Allah. We are prevented from eating and drinking, there is no prohibition on days other than in the month of Ramadan, so when you feel hungry and thirsty you realize that you are a servant of Allah, and you are in need of a sip of water. Actually, the more you feel that you need Allah, the more will Allah raise your station. As the poet said:

**I have no way (to be close to You) except my dire need of You;  
By my need for You I push away my poverty (my need for other things).**

**There is no door to knock except Yours (I ask no one but You).  
But if you drive me away, on which door shall I knock! (there is no other one to help me)**

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So first, it accustoms us to feel the dire need of Allah.

- The second wisdom:



Fast convinces us that we are loyal to Allah (we are doing righteous deeds only for His sake ) because no law of the world will call you to account if you eat during the day in Ramadan. It is specifically related to the deen. You may come home ( while you are fasting) feeling extremely thirsty, while there is cold water in the refrigerator, and there is no one else in the house, i.e. no one is watching you, nevertheless you never put a drop of water in your mouth (because you believe that Allah watches you). So:

**"Every deed of the son of Adam is for him except fasting; it is for Me and I shall reward him for it."**

[Agreed upon]

Verily, fasting is worshiping with devotion.

- The third wisdom:

There is another thing: fasting strengthens the will, i.e. if you avoid permissible things during the days of Ramadan, that is all the more reason to abandon the illicit ones. you go against the very bases of the spirit of Ramadhan when you refrain from eating and drinking, nevertheless you lie; you go against the very bases of the spirit of

Ramadhan when you refrain from eating and drinking, nevertheless you fill your eyes with the beauty of a woman who is not permitted to you; you go against the very bases of the spirit of Ramadhan when you refrain from eating and drinking, nevertheless you swear a false oath while buying or selling!

Actually, when Allah deprives you of the licit during your fast, that is all the more reason to abandon the illicit. It seems as if Allah wanted to strengthen your will and your determination in this noble month.

- The fourth wisdom:



There is something else; Allah wants us to experience the situation of the poor. In fact, you either face the reality or perceive it by your mind, and there is a big difference between the two cases. Just for clarification, if a friend of yours had a quarrel with his wife and consequently she has left home and went to her parent's house, you've got a notion that your friend's wife has abandoned him. Your own wife is at home (you have a successful marriage), your food is ready, your children are well looked after, their food is good, their clothes are clean, all your needs are taken care of, and your house is clean. So you do not live the reality of being without a wife, but you realize that your friend's wife has left him. Thus, perceiving reality is totally different from experiencing it. As the saying goes:

**No one knows the feeling of yearning except who has experienced it; and no one knows the burning love except who has experienced it.**

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Thus, in Ramadan, Allah the Almighty wants us to experience the suffering of the poor. On ordinary days (other than the days of Ramadan), we eat and drink, and we do not appreciate the value of cold water, and hot (good) food. We always eat and drink, while the poor have nothing to eat.

By Allah, one of my friends told me that he went to the house of one of his relatives, and he swore that he opened the fridge and found it completely empty, there wasn't a piece of bread to eat in that house. Hence, when you become hungry (due to fasting) you should remember that there are those who have nothing to eat.

Once a woman went to a shop and bought chicken legs, which are only given to dogs. So due to her severe poverty, she bought those chicken legs, and cooked them in order to give just the taste of meat to their food.



One of Ramadan advantages is that it is the month of generosity

Brother, Ramadan is the month of spending on the poor, of righteousness, of benevolence, of sadaqah, and of zakat. Moreover, the Self-Sufficient and the Judge (Allah the Almighty) never accepts fasting unless zakat al-fitr is paid. Actually, Imam Shafi'i has established that it is preferable to pay zakat al-fitr starting from the first day of Ramadan, because it is food for the poor and an expiation of sins. So Allah wants everyone to give sadaqah in Ramadan, even the poor, i.e. it is imposed upon whoever has his daily food, the food that is sufficient just for one day, so that the poor man may enjoy the taste of spending even if only once a year.

Dear brother, fasting in Ramadan remains suspended between the heaven and earth (is not accepted) unless zakat al-fitr is paid.

### Relation between the rites of adoration and righteous deeds

Dear brother, ritual acts of worship, as fasting, are deemed invalid, and are not accepted unless we act correctly. Thus:

#### 1 –fasting and perjury:

**"Whoever does not abandon false speech and acting by it; then Allah is not in need of him abandoning his food and drink."**

**"How much of the fasting is not from his fast, except hunger and thirst."**

[Narrated by Ibn Majah and Al-Nassai'i from Abu Hurayrah]

Verily, the fast of common people is to abandon food and drink, and the fast of believers is to abandon sins and wrongdoings, while the fast of righteous worshippers is to abandon everything except Allah.

**"All the works of Adam are for him, but fasting is for Me and I shall reward him for it."**

[Agreed upon from Abu Hurayrah]

## 2 – Hajj and ill-gotten gains:

As regards hajj:

**"Whoever performed hajj out of unlawfully gained money, and put his foot in the stirrup (drove a vehicle to travel), and said: "I am at Your service, O Allah", will be told (the angles will say to him):  
"Your hajj has not been accepted."**

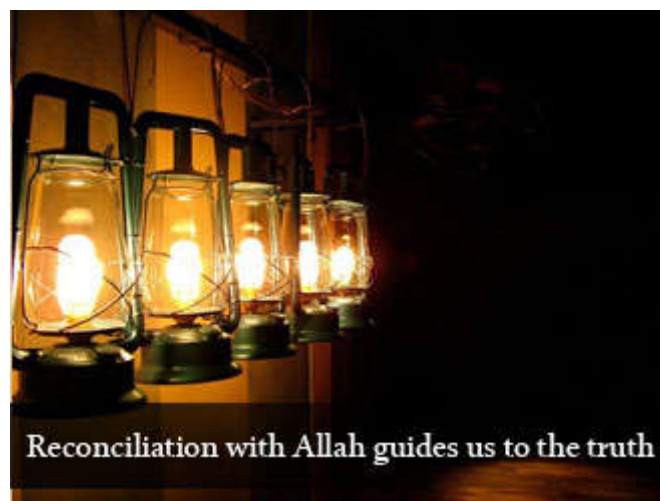
[Mentioned in tradition]

So, neither salah, nor fasting, nor pilgrimage are accepted or are deemed right unless you take into account the way you deal with sh3er. Actually, a believer is honest and never lies, he is faithful and never betrays, and he is pious and never commits major faults. So in order to be a real honest believer, fasting is obligatory. Allah the Almighty says:

**"O you who believe! Observing as-saum (fast) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-muttaqun (those who fear and practise self-restraint)."**

(Al-Baqarah, 2:183)

## Piety:



"Piety", broadly speaking, means obedience to Allah. Actually, when you ask Allah His forgiveness, repent to Him and perform righteous deeds, you are close to Allah during your salah. Then, what are the results of

this salah? It is that Allah Almighty will cast a light in your heart that shows you the righteous things as righteous and the wrong things as wrong.

**"O you who believe! Fear Allah, and believe in His Messenger, and He will give you a double portion of His Mercy, and He will give you a light by which you shall walk (straight). "**

(Al-Hadid, 57: 28)

This light shows you the righteous things as righteous and the wrong things as wrong. Verily, this light is piety.

**"O you who believe! Observing as-saum (fast) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-muttaqun (those who fear and practise self-restraint)."**

(Al-Baqarah, 2:183)

Piety, as it was defined by Imam al-Ghazzali, may Allah Almighty grant mercy upon his soul, is: "A light that Allah casts in your heart." It shows you good and evil as they are. In fact, in regard to those people who commit sins and wrongdoings, what did they see before they committed them? They saw them as achievement and pleasure. So whoever disobeys Allah has a wrong vision (a false perception) and there is blindness in his heart. Allah the Almighty says:

**"But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment. He will say: O my Lord, why have You raised me up blind, while I had sight (before)? (Allah) will say: Thus did you..."**

(Taha, 20: 124-126)

Which means: thus you were blind (to the truth) in the worldly life, because:

**"Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but the hearts which are in their breast."**

(Al-Hajj, 22:46)

Verily, just when you are away from Allah (when you disobey Him), you will lose that light; you see the good as evil, and the evil as good. You will see spending on sadaqah as foolishness; stinginess as prudence,

satisfying illicit lusts as intelligence, and avoiding them as stupidity. Therefore, in order to see good and bad as such, Allah obliged us to fast in the month of Ramadan.

**"O you who believe! Observing as-saum (fast) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-muttaqun (those who fear and practise self-restraint)."**

(Al-Baqarah, 2:183)

**"(Observing saum) for a fixed number of days..."**

(Al-Baqarah, 2: 184)

### **Salah is purification from filth (sins)**

Dear brother, there is something else, salah purifies man from filth. Therefore, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

**"Salah is light."**

[Narrated by Muslim from Abu Maalik al-Ash'ari]

### **Aim of all acts of worship: being close to Allah**

We must know that Allah enjoined on us salah, fast, hajj, zakah, honesty, truthfulness, chastity, and obedience to Him in order to gain close proximity to Him. So this is the first and the only aim for all these ritual acts of worship.

#### **1 –The meanings of many acts of worship are in salah:**

Actually, salah contains the notion of fasting because you are prevented from eating, moving and speaking while performing it, which exceeds the act of fasting. In addition to that, it has the notion of hajj because when you offer it, you face the House of Allah (qiblah); and it has the notion of zakat because making money needs time, and during your salah you are dedicating a part of your time to perform this act of worship. In fact, salah is the only act of worship whose obligation never gets abolished under any circumstances, while the obligation of fasting gets abolished for the traveler and the sick, and the obligation of hajj gets abolished for the sick and the poor, and the obligation of zakat gets abolished for the poor, and saying the testimony of faith (that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger) takes place once in a lifetime, while the only repeated worship that does not fall under any of these circumstances is salah. Therefore:



**"Salah is a pillar of the deen. He who establishes it, establishes the deen; and he who destroys it, destroys the deen."**

[Narrated by Attabarani from Muadh]

## 2 –Salah is purification (of the soul):

There is nothing good in the deen without salah. Actually, it purifies the soul from hatred, deception, arrogance, haughtiness, selfishness, and from egoism. In addition to that, it is light, as I said earlier, from Allah, which He casts in your heart during your prayer so that you see good and bad as such. Moreover, salah is delight.

**"O Bilal relieve us with the salah."**

[Narrated by Muslim from 'Amr ibn Murrah from Salem bin Abi Ja'd]

## 3 –Salah is closeness to Allah:

Salah brings you closer to Allah:

**"Fall prostrate and draw near to Allah!"**

(Al-Alaq, 96:19)

## 4 –Salah is supplication:

Besides bringing us closer to Allah, being delight, purification and light, it is also supplication and remembering (praising, glorification, etc.) Allah the Almighty.

**"And remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt."**

(Surat Al-Ankabut, 29:45)

## Some meanings of "and remembrance of Allah is the greatest"

The first meaning:

It means that the praising of Allah is the greatest thing in salah, as mentioned by some commentators.

The second meaning:

There is another meaning: the fact of Allah remembering you (in front of the angles) during salah is greater than your praising Him. In other words, if you praise Him, you are performing your duty as a servant of His, while if Allah remembers you in front of His angels it means that He will grant you success, He will complete and perfect His Graces upon you, both apparent (i.e. Islamic Monotheism, and the lawful pleasures of this world) and hidden (i.e. wisdom, and also the pleasures and delights of the Hereafter in Paradise, etc.) He will guide you to doing righteous

deeds, and He will grant you wisdom, and peace of mind. Therefore:  
"and the remembering of Allah is the greatest"

#### 5 –Salah is a confidential conversation (between you and Allah):

Dear brother: besides being purification and light, it is also a confidential conversation between you and Allah. Actually, if the one who performs it really knows with Whom he is talking in privacy, he will be captivated by this conversation. So it is an intimate discourse.

#### 6 –Salah is an ascension for the believer:

It makes the believer ascend to Allah the Almighty; it is also supplication, praising Allah, and getting closer to Him.

**"Fall prostrate and draw near to Allah!"**

(Al-Alaq, 96:19)

**"Not everybody who prays, offers a real prayer, but I accept the salah only from him who humbles himself to My Majesty, keeps his desires away from what I prohibited, does not insist on disobeying Me, feeds the hungry, clothes the poor, has mercy upon the sick, and gives shelter to the stranger, and he does all of that for My sake. By My Glory and Majesty I deem the light of his face as more than sunlight; I will convert his ignorance into patience and darkness into light (for him). When he calls or asks Me, I will respond him and when he swears by My name, I will fulfill his oath. I will protect him by means of My angels. His likeness is that of the Paradise whose fruits never change and remain in their places."**

[Narrated by al-Dailami for Haritha bin Wahab]

So Brother:

**"Salah is a pillar of the deen of Islam. He who establishes it, establishes the deen; and he who destroys it, destroys the deen."**

There is nothing good in a deen which has no salah. Verily, Allah enjoins fasting on us for the sake of salah; you abandon food and drink during the day in Ramadan, and you receive the reward from the One and the Jude in the night of Ramadan through the night prayers.

**"Whoever prays during the nights in Ramadan (taraweeh) with faith and seeking his reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven."**

## A call to seize the opportunity of Ramadan



So, we are in the month of obedience, of being close to Allah, of spending on the poor, and of the Noble Quran because it was revealed in Ramadan, as if Allah allowed you in this Noble Month to begin to behave in a more positive way and offering forgiveness for all your previous sins. So it is an opportunity (which you should seize). Therefore:

**"The one who fasts has two pleasures: when he breaks his fast it is a pleasure and when he meets his Lord, He is pleased with his fasting."**

[Agreed upon, from Abu Hurayrah]

Which means: He is pleased when he breaks his fast after the month of Ramadan in which he has fasted is over, in which he prayed at night, lowered his glance, reauthored the Noble Quran, prayed the dawn and the night prayers at a mosque, visited his relatives and spent his money (on charity) in the Way of Allah.

By the way, brother, our next lesson, insha-Allah, will be devoted to zakat, and this on account of Ramadan.