

in everything that we do we try to be competitive... we love to win and we dislike to lose in anything that we do in this dunya... so what about in Ramadan?

The month of great rewards has come to us in all its beauty and glory. It is an honored guest and a blessed month; its virtues are clear and its blessings manifest. No one can enumerate its bounties and fruits. When it comes, a caller gives this beautiful call: "O seeker of good; proceed! O seeker of evil, desist! Allah saves some people from Hell."

It is true that the souls of the believers long for Ramadan to come and pure hearts yearn for its arrival.

Many are those who aspired to reach this month but could not, those who hoped to seize this opportunity but failed, as they were suddenly overtaken by death and passed away.

The departure of those who have died represents a warning for us, to make us realize that death is near; that we are about to leave this world very soon and that we do not have sufficient provisions for the long journey we have ahead of us. Thus, we must make haste to avail of the prizes and rewards of Allah The Almighty before no repentance is accepted, no obstacles are removed and no amount of money can be offered to save someone. Show Allah The Almighty goodness from yourselves. It is by serious hard work that the winners attain victory and through determination do the successful succeed. 'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said, "The Messenger of Allah, used to exert more [in worship] in Ramadan than in other months." [Muslim]

O slave of Allah, it is time for hard work if you are serious, time for worship if you are ready. The stream of blessings is pouring out and the door of goodness is open for whoever likes to enter. The Prophet, said: "When Ramadan comes, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained." [Muslim]

It is time for the one who is used to committing sins and perpetrating crimes and disobedience to Allah, to regret his misdeeds and repent to Allah The Almighty, as your hopes and rewards are within reach. Allah The Almighty loves to bestow His favors upon His slaves and to grant them mercy. Indeed, those who repent are granted His favors only because of His generosity and benevolence.

If you were held captive by sins in the past, here is the month of Ramadan coming to you. It is in this month when captives are freed, criminals are pardoned and sinners are forgiven. Therefore, do not be among the rejected or the losers that the Prophet told us about:

عن أبي هريرة، أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم صعد المنبر، فقال: (آمين آمين آمين، قيل: يا رسول الله، إنك حين صعدت المنبر قلت: آمين آمين آمين، قال: أتاني جبريل فقال: يا محمد! من أدرك أحد والديه فمات فدخل النار فأبعده الله قل: آمين فقلت: آمين قال: يا محمد من أدرك شهر رمضان فمات فلم يغفر له فأدخل النار فأبعده الله قل: آمين فقلت: آمين قال: ومن ذكرت عنده فلم يصلّ عليك فمات فدخل النار فأبعده الله قل: آمين فقلت: آمين).

The Prophet, ascended the Minbar (pulpit) and said: "Ameen, ameen, ameen." It was said, 'O Messenger of Allah, you ascended the pulpit and said, 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.' He said: "Jibreel came to me and said, 'If Ramadan comes and a person is not forgiven, he will enter Hell and Allah will cast him far away. Say Ameen.' So I said Ameen. [Al-Albaani: Hasan Saheeh]

Throughout the Quran and Sunnah we find mention of the winners and the losers so the losers are going to regret about to go to hell with any losers in Ramadan. Now we are in the Championship match, the world cup, finals 29-30 Days to win a gold trophy, silver trophy or bronze trophy or not win anything at all....

Brothers and sisters, many months of Ramadan have passed in previous years, yet many people did not witness a significant change in themselves, whether through increasing their acts of worship or avoiding sins. They're still committing the same sins that they were doing before and after the last Ramadan.

The only reason is that many of them lose out in the month of fasting. They are losers, as they have never truly tasted the delight and pleasure of Ramadan nor experienced the happiness and sweetness of doing good deeds, nor the beauty of the Quran and the guidance it contains to live a happy life.

Year after year, the month of Ramadan passes by and their memories of it are nothing but long hours of sleep or hunger during the day, staying up late at night watching movies, on the internet, facebook, while gossiping and incurring a burden of bad deeds and a heavy bulk of sins.

Some refraining from food, drink and intimacy during the day attaining great reward, but then start the nights with backbiting, slandering, gossiping, listening to Music, smoking, drinking and consuming intoxicants...erasing the hard work they put in during the day.

The losers during the month of Ramadan gain nothing by way of good deeds except a little Quran recited hastily, and prayers performed quickly, more concerned about time and rushing through the evening, things that do not take even one-tenth of the time that is spent immersed in desires and worldly pleasures. This is serious my brother and sisters...May Allah make us successful and winners in the month of Ramadan, and help us to avoid being losers and doing things that the losers do.

So in order for us to not be from amongst the losers that the Prophet mentioned, we should mention some of their characteristics.

A loser is one who does not fast with the intention of receiving Allah's reward, and out of love for Allah, rather they fast because it is a cultural tradition or custom, or to conform with the people around them.

A loser is the one who doesn't pray their obligatory prayers throughout the year out of laziness, disregard and denial, in Ramadan as well as outside of Ramadan.

: {فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا}

"But there came after them successors who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil and a bad result"

A loser is the one whose behaviour doesn't change during Ramadan or after Ramadan, they continue to have terrible manners, deal with the haram, they have bad behavior, foul speech, they continue to lie, backbite, curse and slander, which are all results of a sick and decrepid heart, as the prophet said:

قال: ((من لم يدع قول الزور والعمل به والجهل فليس لله حاجة في أن يدع طعامه وشرابه))

"Whoever doesn't abandon false speech and action upon it and ignorance, then Allah has no need for one refraining from eating and drinking."

A loser is he who wastes his time in Ramadan in doing what displeases Allah The Almighty

رَبِّ صَائِمٍ لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ صِيَامِهِ إِلَّا الْجُوعُ وَرَبِّ قَائِمٍ لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ قِيَامِهِ إِلَّا السَّهْرُ

"There are people who fast and get nothing from their fast except hunger, and there are those who pray and get nothing from their prayer but a sleepless night."

A loser is he who wastes one day of Ramadan after the other, not reading the Quran except a little, not praying except whenever it's convenient for him, not coming to Taraweeh except for the Khatam al Quran night.

A loser is the one who breaks their fast intentionally without any valid excuse, thinking that as long as the people don't see them it's ok to eat and drink. They are losers because they don't remember that Allah sees them wherever they are.

~~The losers are those that break their fasts by drinking, eating or having intimacy intentionally.~~

The losers are those who not only break their fasts but break their religion as well, when they engage in backbiting, slander, lying, jealousy, hatred, disputes based on falsehood, and mockery of others, all of this because of their weakness of faith, all they receive for their rewards are hunger pains and a loss of sleep.

The losers are those who exert themselves greatly in the beginning of the month making tawbah, and seeking forgiveness, but throughout the month they go back to the sins they were committing before Ramadan.

A loser is he who is rich but does not spend his money generously in sympathy for the poor or to develop his local community. He does not take part in feeding the fasting people, helping the poor or supporting the needy. He stands in contrast and in opposition of his Prophet, who was the most generous person ever in ordinary times, and was even more generous in Ramadan as he was likened to the fast wind that brings rain and benefits others.

These are the losers brother and sisters...

The reason these people experienced loss, is because they weren't sincere to Allah, and they did not truly want to change, so they did not benefit from their time during Ramadan, nor were they eager to return back to Allah through seeking repentance and forgiveness. And they themselves are the only ones to blame...so let us not be from amongst these categories of people who will be from the losers not only in Ramadan, but for the rest of their lives. May Allah make us from the successful and the winners, and those that renew their covenant with Allah, and those that recharge our spiritual selves this Ramadan and continue upon goodness after Ramadan.

Second Khutbah

Allah, the Most Truthful, described the days of Ramadan as a limited number of days, in truth. They pass by quickly and swiftly, and thus, are precious to the righteous and extremely valuable and high in the estimation of the Lord of the Day of Judgment. The winner is he who fills them with good deeds, struggles with his soul and purifies it and the loser is he who instills them with corruption and avoids all goodness.

We mentioned the losers in the first khutbah, so What are the characteristics of the winners in Ramadan:

The winners are those that have sincere intentions to fast, pray, and do good deeds for Allah alone, while hoping for his gracious rewards, those are the ones that the prophet said:

(من قام رمضان إيماناً واحتساباً، غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه) :

'Whoever prays Ramadan with faith and sincerely seeking Allah's reward, then his previous sins will be forgiven'

They are the ones Allah described in the Quran:

(تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ * فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ)

'They forsake their beds at night, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (charity in Allah's Cause) out of what We have bestowed on them.'

The winners are those who the Prophet said about:

ومن صام رمضان إيماناً واحتساباً، غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه

'Whoever fasts Ramadan with faith and sincerely seeking Allah's reward, then his previous sins will be forgiven.'

The winners are those who are generous in Ramadan, and spend from the wealth and sustenance that Allah has provided them with, sincerely seeking Allah's reward alone, not spending their wealth to be praised or thanked by the people, as Allah says:

(وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا * إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا *)

"And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive,

[Saying], "We feed you only for the countenance of Allah . We wish not from you reward or gratitude."

The winners are those whom the Prophet said about:

مَا تَصَدَّقَ أَحَدٌ بِصَدَقَةٍ مِنْ طَيِّبٍ - وَلَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا الطَّيِّبَ - إِلَّا أَخَذَهَا الرَّحْمَنُ بِيَمِينِهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ تَمْرَةً فَتَرَبُّو فِي كَفِّ الرَّحْمَنِ حَتَّى تَكُونَ
أَعْظَمَ مِنَ الْجَبَلِ كَمَا يُرَبِّي أَحَدَكُمْ فَلَوْهُ أَوْ قَصِينَهُ

If anyone gives as Sadaqa the equivalent of a date from that (earning) earned honestly, for Allah accepts that which is lawful, the Lord would accept it with His Right Hand, and even if it is a date, it would foster in the Hand of the lord, as one of you fosters his colt, till it becomes bigger than a mountain.

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The Winners in Ramadan are those who spend their wealth to remove the sins that they have committed previously, as the prophet said:

وَالصَّدَقَةُ تُطْفِئُ الْخَطِيئَةَ كَمَا يُطْفِئُ الْمَاءُ النَّارَ

"charity extinguishes bad deeds just as water extinguishes fire."

The winners in Ramadan are those who provide food for the fasting people, as the Prophet said:

مَنْ فَطَرَ صَائِمًا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِهِ غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ لَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أَجْرِ الصَّائِمِ شَيْئًا

"Whoever provides the food for a fasting person to break his fast with, then for him is the same reward as his (the fasting person's), without anything being diminished from the reward of the fasting person."

The winners in Ramadan are those who strive to reconcile between others, bring people back together, unify communities, families and friends...

Unfortunately there are some people who have witnessed many Ramadans and they still have not reconciled with their brothers and sisters in Islam, they still have hatred towards them, feelings of jealousy towards them, they would not be forgiven until they reconcile, as the Prophet said:

تُفْتَحُ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ وَيَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ فَيُغْفَرُ لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُسْلِمٍ لَا يُشْرِكُ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِلَّا رَجُلًا كَانَتْ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ أَخِيهِ شَحْنَاءُ فَيَقَالُ
" أَنْظِرُوا هَذَيْنِ حَتَّى يَصْطَلِحَا أَنْظِرُوا هَذَيْنِ حَتَّى يَصْطَلِحَا "

"The doors of the Garden are opened on Monday and Thursday. Every muslim slave who does not associate anything with Allah is forgiven except for the man who has enmity between him and his brother. It is said, 'Leave these two until they have made a reconciliation. Leave these two until they have made a reconciliation.' "

The winners in Ramadan are those who forgive and pardon and overlook their brothers and sisters past mistakes, just as they would like Allah to overlook and pardon and forgive our mistakes, as Allah says:

(وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ)

and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

The winners are those who read and ponder over the meanings of the quran in this blessed month of Ramadan:

(شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ) [28]

Living your life with the Quran will bring you happiness, bliss, peace, serenity, tranquility, good health and so much more.

The winners are those who implement the Quran into their lives, and submit to all of Allah's commandments, and Prohibitions giving them precedence over their desires, personal opinions and views. The winners are those who adorn themselves with the etiquettes, the manners, and all the principles laid down in the Quran as was the example of the Prophet Muhammad.

The winners are those who seize this opportunity to get back to reading the Quran...many of us after reaching an old age may regret not busying ourselves with the Quran and pondering over it's verses and surahs.

عاش خالد بن الوليد رضي الله عنه مع القرآن حتى أنه في آخر حياته أمسك بالمصحف وبكى وقال : (شغلني عنك الجهاد)

Khalid ibn Waleed used to keep the Quran with him all the time, and towards the end of his life he grabbed the Quran and said: 'Fighting for the sake of Allah kept me from reading you more'

He was so busy fighting the enemies of Allah, which is considered one of the best forms of worship in the sight of Allah....So what is busying us from reading and pondering over the Quran...? What is busying us from learn more about our religion... is it some other form of worship of Allah like Khalid ibn Waleed... or is it our worldly affairs and the accumulation of money, wealth, children and status.

The winners in Ramadan are those who make the Quran their companion, as the Quran is the only companion that will benefit you when everyone else cannot. The Quran will be there after you die, when your mother and father flee from you, when your brothers and sisters leave you, when your children, your family and all your relatives abandon you.

The Quran will represent you and defend you as the Prophet said:

اقْرءُوا الْقُرْآنَ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْتِي بِكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شَفِيعًا لِأَصْحَابِهِ

'Read the Quran for indeed it will be an intecessor on the day of resurrection for those who recite it'

The Quran will be a proof either for you if you acted upon it and abided by it's teachings, and a proof against you if you disregarded it and it's teachings.

The winners are those who take heed of the instructions contained in the Quran and open their hearts to be cured by the Quran, as Allah says:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

O mankind, there has to come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers

The winners are those who purify their hearts from disbelief, hypocrisy, hatred and mockery of other believers, and truly attain continuous piety, as this is the goal of this month of Fasting, Praying, and Charity, as Allah says:

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ) [31]

O You who believe, fasting has been prescribe for you as it has been prescribed for the previous nations, so that you will attain piety.'

The winners are those who attain continuous piety and try to reach a physical, spiritual, and intellectual state that makes one feel as though their whole life is dedicated for Allah's service and the service of Islam and the Muslims, He always asks Allah to make him an obedient servant to Him and a beneficial servant to his community.

And finally my beloved brothers and sisters, one of the best characteristics that those who are seeking to be winners in Ramadan can have is being successful to make repentance to Allah azza wa jal.

The winner is the one who renews his covenant with Allah, the winner is the one who repents from those sins and deficiencies, repents from those mistakes, repents from the laziness that made you miss prayers, not pay zakat, not make hajj, and maybe the disregard of Allah's commandments.

The winners in Ramadan are the ones who realize that the doors of repentance and forgiveness are always open, and seize the opportunity to repent before it's too late.

The winners in Ramadan are those who will renew their promise to be obedient to Allah, promise Him you'll not be disobedient to Him as well. The winners are those who sincerely regret the previous sins, and exert sincere efforts to abandon them and never return back to them again. Listen to what our magnificent and merciful lord has waiting for these people:

يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ! إِنَّكَ مَا دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجَوْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ عَلَى مَا كَانَ مِنْكَ وَلَا أُبَالِي، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ! لَوْ بَلَغَتْ ذُنُوبُكَ عَنَانَ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ اسْتَغْفَرْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ! إِنَّكَ لَوْ أَتَيْتَنِي بِقَرَابِ الْأَرْضِ خَطَايَا ثُمَّ لَقَيْتَنِي لَا تُشْرِكُ بِي شَيْئًا لَأَتَيْتَكَ بِقَرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةً

"Allah the Almighty has said: 'O Son of Adam, as long as you invoke Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O Son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and you then asked forgiveness from Me, I would forgive you. O Son of Adam, were you to

come to Me with sins nearly as great as the Earth, and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as it [too].’ ”

So be from amongst the winners this Ramadan, don't be shy from your lord, don't think that Allah will not forgive you, don't think that your sins are too much...Just sincerely regret your sins, make a promise to never return to it again, turn to Allah in repentance, and follow Allah's commandments while avoiding His prohibitions, and we will see much success in our lives.

And be informed O servants of Allah, that Allah loves for us to repent to him and this makes our lord extremely happy as the Prophet said

" اللَّهُ أَشَدُّ فَرَحًا بِتَوْبَةِ عَبْدِهِ مِنْ أَحَدِكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَيْقَظَ عَلَى بَعِيرِهِ قَدْ أَضَلَّهُ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَاةٍ "

Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than if one of you gets up and he finds his camel missing in a waterless desert (and then he accidentally finds it).

The winners are those who realize that Allah knows that we commit sins, and Allah knows that we transgress His limits, and this is why we need to constantly seek Allah's forgiveness and repentance, as Allah says:

(قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ) [25].

Say: "O 'Ibadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.