Conclusion of Ramadan

Not long ago, we welcomed Ramadan with a mixture of feelings that overwhelmed our hearts and the hearts of Muslims all over the world. The hearts were and are full of hope, based on the promises and great tidings, given by Allah and His Messenger (S), of great bounties and endless blessings:

* We have been promised that the past sins will be forgiven for those whose fast is based on belief (Eemaan), sincerity and on truly expecting the reward from Allah (Ihtisaab).
* We also have been promised that the past sins will be forgiven for those who offer night prayers (Qiyaam) during the whole month, and who do that with the same two conditions of Eemaan and Ihtisaab.
* We have further been told that there is one night in this month which is better (in rewards) than a thousand months of worship, and that all the past sins will be forgiven for those who spend it by offering Qiyaam again with both Eemaan and Ihtisaab.
* We have been told that the devils will be chained down, that the gates of Hell will all be shut and that the gates of Paradise will all be open throughout this month.
* We have been told that Allah will free (from punishment) some of his ‘ibaad (worshipers) on every single night of Ramadan.
* We have been told that Allah answers the du’aa of the fasting person at his iftaar.
* We have been told that Allah multiplies the rewards of fasting beyond limits or imagination.
* We have been told that the fasting person will be joyous and happy when he meets his Lord.

We all knew the true meaning of fasting. We knew that there are conditions for the fasting to be acceptable and to give its desired results: Eemaan and Ihtisaab.

So now that Ramadan is almost over let us ask ourselves:

Did we perform our fast with the true belief and the full surrender to Allah, or was it just a hard exercise for us in order to lose some weight? Did we fast because Allah imposed it on us or just because we have been used to it from our childhood? Were our intentions to please Him or to please and impress others?

Did we gain from the Season of Goodness during the past days? Have we been able to achieve any of its virtues?

* We all hope to be among those who offered the fast in the right way, in order to cultivate its glorious fruits.
* We hope to be granted forgiveness of our previous sins, to be able to do much more good and to overcome all our weaknesses.
* We hope to be among those who receive the gifts from the Jannah, whose gates are open.
* We hope to humiliate our enemy (Satan), who is chained down, by rejecting any of his deceitful advice.
* We hope to be among those who shall be granted full atonement of their sins by the end of this month, and among those who will be most happy with their fast when they meet their Lord.
* We hope that all of us will be pleasing to Allah in our words and deeds so that we deserve His Mercy and victory.

Let us also keep in mind that the exercise of piety that we have performed during this Ramadan must not end with Ramadan.

Reciting Quran should not stop after Ramadan. If you can read one part every day then do so, but if one part is too much for you because you are too busy playing games and watching TV, then read something But do not neglect the Quran. You may not be able to fast every day after Ramadan, but you can fast three days every month, if not two days every week.

You may not be able to meet the members of this good Muslim community as we do for Iftars and Taraweeh prayers, but you can meet them every Friday after Ramadan and during other social gatherings which are made in the spirit of Ramadan.

Every Ramadan, this community, together with the members of the Islamic society at this collage, provide an excellent example about genuine brotherhood by the degree of cooperation, kindness and generosity offered and clearly manifested during Ramadan. Let us pray to Allah to keep within each one of us the spirit of Ramadan after its departure.

**ZAKAAH AL-FITR**

Zakah al-Fitr is the name given to charity which is distributed at the end of the fast of Ramadan. It is classified as a Wajib (compulsory) on every Muslim, whether male or female, minor or adult as long as he/she has the means to do so.

The proof that this form of charity is compulsory can be found in the Sunnah whereby Ibn `Umar reported that the Prophet made Zakah al-Fitr compulsory on every Muslim, male, female, young or old. The head of the household of family may pay the required amount for the other members.

The significant role played by Zakah in the circulation of wealth within the Islamic society is also played by the Zakah al-Fitr. However, in the case of Zakah al-Fitr, each individual is required to calculate how much charity is due from himself and his dependents and go into the community in order to find those who deserve such charity. Thus, Zakah al-Fitr plays a very important role in the development of the bonds of community. The rich are obliged to come in direct contact with the poor, and the poor are put in contact with the extremely poor.

This contact between the various levels of society helps to build real bonds of brotherhood and love within the Islamic community and trains those who have, to be generous to those who do not have.

The main purpose of Zakah al-Fitr is to provide those who fasted with the means of making up for their errors during the month of fasting. Zakah al-Fitr also provides the poor with a means with which they can celebrate Eid al-Fitr along with the rest of the Muslims.

Ibn Abbaas reported, “The Prophet made Zakah al-Fitr compulsory so that those who fasted may be purified of their idle deeds and shameful talk (committed during Ramadan) and so that the poor may be fed. Whoever gives it before Salah will have it accepted as Zakah, while he who gives it after the Salah has given Zakah.”

Hence, the goal of Zakah al-Fitr is the spiritual development of the Believers. By making them give up some of their wealth, the believers are taught the higher moral characteristics of generosity, compassion (sympathy for the less fortunate), gratitude to God and the righteousness. But, since Islam does not neglect man’s material need, part of the goal of Zakah al-Fitr is the economic well-being of the poorer members of society.

Zakah al-Fitr is only Wajib for a particular period of time. If one misses the time period without a good reason, he has sinned and can not make it up. This form of charity becomes obligatory from sunset on the last day of fasting and remains obligatory until the beginning of Salaah al-’Eed’ .

However, it can be paid prior to the above mentioned period, as many of the companions of the Prophet used to pay Zakah al-Fitr before the `Eed. Ibn `Umar used to give it to those who would accept it and the people used to give it a day or two before the `Eed. And Ibn `Abbaas reported that the Prophet said,

*“Whoever gives it before the Salah will have it accepted as Zakaah, while he who gives it after the Salaah will not, for it will only be considered as ordinary charity.*

The amount of the Zakah is the same for everyone regardless of their different income brackets. The amount used to be made out of certain quantity of is of food, or grain. Now a days the amount of the Zakah is calculated by its monetary value. Keeping the purpose of the Zakah in mind, the contemporary scholars believe that making the Zakah in money is practical and more beneficial to those who are entitled to it.

What would a person do now with so much barley, wheat or even dates!

Successful indeed are those who, during this Ramadan, will fast during the day and pray at night. Those who did not will regret it, and regret it strongly …

[Arabic Du'a]

Ameen. Aqeemus Salaah!