



Youth, Desires & Ramadan

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Br. AbdelRahman Murphy

Summarized by: Sister S.T.

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[Hāfiz Wisam]: All praise and thanks are due to Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*) who gave us this chance. I praise and thank Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*) for giving me the opportunity to be Muslim. I praise Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*) today for having the chance to have friends. I praise Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*) because the world is beautiful. Trees and plants are green and people smile when they see you. I praise Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*) for being alive in 2011, and I pray and ask Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*) to make me amongst those who meet the people who are listening to today's broadcast.

We want to be able to speak about Ramaḍān and its preparation from a different angle today. We would like to start by opening up the floor to questions after we lay the groundwork. Allāh's strongest āyah in the Qur' ān about fasting is: "O you who believe, a prescription has been prescribed for you – fasting has been ordained for you." Everyone knows that Tylenol isn't the disease and isn't even the cure to the disease. It is a medication that highlights some of the effects of the disease. This is the medication that we all need to take and that the generations before us were prescribed to take, but let's keep it real – not everyone took the medication. The purpose of the medication: "...so that with a little bit of effort we can obtain *taqwa*." God has prescribed upon us to fast as it was prescribed to the people before us so that we will, with some effort, be able to fear God's punishment, have hope in His Mercy, and be conscious that He and His Attributes are going to guide us through our lives.

I want to remind us that fasting is not the purpose of Ramaḍān. The purpose of Ramaḍān comes two āyahs later. Fasting is just the medication. What you want is to be better and feel better. Spiritually, we won't feel better until we connect with Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*), the One who created us.

Ramaḍān is not about fasting. In fact, Allāh didn't call Ramaḍān the month of fasting. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*) said, "Ramaḍān is the month of the Qur' ān." If you really want to pour that gold into your body and fill your heart with the diamonds and gems of the Qur' ān, then make sure that it is clean. Ramaḍān is the Qur' ān, and the Qur' ān is about preparing ourselves by fasting.

If fasting doesn't cleanse us, then you all know that there is no point in doing it. I'm going to turn it over to Br. AbdelRahman. We are going to talk about āyah 14 of Sūrah Āle-Imrān. Follow along with us.

Sūrah Āle-‘Imrān, Āyah 14

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ
الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ
وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ
حُسْنُ الْمُنَاقَبِ ﴿١٤﴾

[Hāfiẓ Wisam]: In āyah 14 of Sūrah Āle-‘Imrān, Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) tells us, “Beautified for mankind...” Allāh is calling the world beautiful, and the things that are in this world are going to be beautiful, so let’s not think of it as hideous and that cars are disgusting and that beautiful things are all *ḥarām*. We are going to go through the categories of what Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) referred to as beautified.

“Mankind is going to be attracted to...[five things].”

[Br. AbdelRahman]: The interesting thing about this āyah is that a lot of us tend to sometimes take one of two stances, which is that we either quickly read over this āyah and put it on someone else or we take the other stance, which is the correct one, and reflect upon the āyah and see which one of these we have. A lot of times when people are trying to reflect, especially in the month of Ramaḍān, about the problems they have and the way to fix these problems, they try to look all over and go to Oprah and Dr. Phil, but what better place is there to look than in the Qur’ ān. We find that Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) in this āyah has highlighted some of the top desires and obstacles that human being may have.

He (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) is telling us what you are going to feel. Sometimes we may not even know the problems we have, which is why it is beautiful that Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) tells us that these are the problems we may have. This āyah highlights them for us to take a deeper look in the mirror to try to fix ourselves.

[Hāfiẓ Wisam]: It is not about us being wrong. If you have a zit on your face and you don’t recognize it and don’t realize it’s there, it is not going to go away. We have to realize that Allāh beautified and made as an enjoyment this world. We will break this up into a few things. If you want to prepare for Ramaḍān, let’s start right from the get-go.

Friends, we know we are not supposed to eat and are not supposed to drink and not supposed to take part in sexual activities with our spouses. There is a really strong point here. When you don’t eat and don’t drink, automatically your desires decrease because your body needs the regular food and drink that it gets. All of a sudden, you will find that your desires decrease.

One of the things we want to start out with is start the week ahead and cut back with what your eyes might wander toward. You all know what I am making reference to. Where do our eyes intertwine more with, and is it just women? Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) is pulling our attention

towards the fact that we have to control our attention towards the opposite gender. If you start doing that one week before, whether that means keeping your eyes away from what you look at naturally or when you look at something you say, “Oh Allāh, I ask your protection from it.” You don’t say, “*Astaghfirullāh*, may Allāh curse that.” No – you say, “Oh Allāh, protect me and guide me from that which you made beautiful.”

Al-Banīn

[Br. AbdelRahman]: The literal translation of *al-banīn* is ‘sons’, but our teacher Shaykh AbdulNasir Jangda let us know that when Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) uses *banīn*, He doesn’t just mean sons. Human beings do desire children, and you see that families sometimes boast when they have a lot of children. Scholars of the Qur’ ān highlight how Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) is not only talking about sons but also talking about the feeling of being part of a bigger group. When you have a big family, you feel great, and we desire to be a part of a larger group.

What Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) is saying is that inside of our bodies, we have this desire for the opposite gender as well as the desire to be part of large groups and be a part of something bigger than ourselves, whether it be our immediate family or our extended family or just our homies or girls that we hang out with. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) is highlighting that this desire is natural and healthy. As Ḥāfiẓ Wisam was saying, in Ramaḍān the focus should be less about other people and more about ourselves. As we see that a part of our heart wants to be part of a larger group, maybe this Ramaḍān we can step back a little bit. Cut out a large percentage of your time and turn it towards yourself and focus on your relationship with Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*).

[Ḥāfiẓ Wisam]: I totally agree with Br. AbdelRahman. Everybody knows this concept of *banīn* and having children. I want you to think of it more like an entourage. The bigger the star, the bigger the entourage. In this month of Ramaḍān, why don’t you take the days before Ramaḍān and send out the Facebook message that the month of Ramaḍān is a month of self-reflection so if they do hit you up and maybe want to go grab coffee, then let them know that you might say no nine out of the ten times because you are trying your best to read the whole Qur’ ān and trying your best to hit one of your goals to pray four prayers in the *masjid* and memorize *ḥadīth* or spend one hour every day in the morning and evening with your mom and dad. It is a month of reflection. Allāh gave us 11 months to literally have a great time, but in this time, it is the month between you and Allāh.

How many blessings do you get for fasting? It is one of the only acts of worship that God doesn’t specify what you are going to get. It is so amazing that it is between you and Allāh. Let’s keep this Ramaḍān intimate and personal with Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*).

Let’s try to control our eyes and say “*a’udhu billāhi min al-shayṭān al-rajīm*.” If the companions had a bad thought, one of the *du‘ā’s* said is: *a’udhu billāhi min al-shayṭāni āmantu billāhi wa rasūli*. There is a sound narration that this *du‘ā*’ was read. Control what your eyes are looking at by using this *du‘ā*’. Remind yourself that you don’t have to surround yourself with your friends constantly. If you don’t want to pray the full 20, pick up a Qur’ ān and read. Keep it real with Allāh.



Money

[Hāfiẓ Wisam]: The next point is that men and women of this world are attracted to money, cash, gold and silver, to big medallions. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) reminds us of this. Allāh has made this for us, so if you are working in Ramaḍān, cut back. If you are spending money, cut back and start giving one cup of coffee a day as *sadaqah*. Give one extra thing that you do a day. You never know what Allāh will bless you for. If Allāh is telling us that money and the pursuit of gold is going to be a difficulty for us in this world, how can we rationalize listening to constant music that is telling us about it? I think it best if we left the concept of gold, money, and cash and also the people that call us to it. Maybe I’m being too old school.

[Br. AbdelRahman]: I tend to agree with you on this point. We all have to understand that whatever you listen to is what you put into your heart. Your heart is a room with a lot of doors – your ears, your eyes, your mouth – and you have to realize that it is going to stay there, and your heart pumps blood into your body, so whatever you allow in is pumped out to the rest of your body. If you see and hear bad things, these things will grow into us and become a part of us. If there is one month out of the year when we can limit what we listen to, it is Ramaḍān.

Ask yourself if the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was listening to this with us, would you feel embarrassed or turn it off? Ask yourself if the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), who loves us so much and did so much to give us this message, was with us, would he be happy and smile or be disappointed and want us to change? If it is disappointment, then maybe we should cut it out. You are getting whatever is inside your heart cleaned out to put pure things in.

[Hāfiẓ Wisam]: I can hear some of you saying, “Oh so you want us to not listen to music in Ramaḍān even though we’re going to listen to it after?” Heck yeah! When we were little we would pretend to be doctors or He-Man – what we played and pretended is what we became when we got older. You are not going to be two-faced. If there is a month to pretend to be religious and say, “Allāh I’m pretending to be religious, so can You make me the way I am pretending?” then it is Ramaḍān.

The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “When you make *du‘ā*, you should cry and say, ‘Allāh I really messed up and need your help.’ If you can’t cry, then pretend as if you are crying and saddened by what you have done, and Allāh will accept it as if you were crying and asking for help.”

So, sisters, maybe if you wear a certain type of clothing outside of Ramaḍān, here is your chance. You are that treasure and angel that Allāh sent to the earth – pull the cloak over your head. Brothers, let this month be the month where people can say, “Yo, what happened to him?” and someone else will say, “Yo, it’s the month of Ramaḍān.”

It is a month for people to say it is possible. All I know is that I have August 1st to August 30th to make it happen. I’m going to go to *fajr* more, I’m going to pray more, I’m going to have the iPhone *tasbīh* app and am going to be saying *subhānAllāh*.



What is 'Religious'?

[Br. AbdelRahman]: I want to ask you real quick, is there a definition of what being religious is or is it open? How do we determine what being religious is? If I want to be religious, do I have to wear a white *thawb* or grow a big beard? If I'm a sister, do I have to wear an all black *hijāb*? What is religious?

[Hāfiẓ Wisam]: Let's start with the number one definition of *birr*, *taqwa*, religiousness in the Qur' ān. It is knowing that what you are doing is right. If your heart is telling you the other 11 months out of the year that you shouldn't backbite, then you shouldn't be backbiting. Religious is following what your *nafs* says is wrong. The first step to religiosity is to do the things that you know are right: don't lie, don't cheat. The first thing is morality. I have to say, you can't play the part unless you look the part. If you feel uncomfortable watching something, then don't watch it.

The candle cannot burn without it giving off heat. We all know what religiousness is. We all know beyond just being a good person and looking the part. We all know that we can bump it up a few notches, and we know what feels right. Look at the person we think is religious and try to look like them.

[Br. AbdelRahman]: I think what we said earlier is important: whatever is in the heart will be magnified by the body. It is a self gauge. Imagine if we all had an immense amount of *taqwa* but then didn't dress properly or talk properly. External appearance of being someone close to God is not just clothing but also the way you talk and walk. In *Sūrah Al-Furqān*, Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*) says, "They walk modestly, they spend modestly, they talk modestly." He describes so many external factors.

We should definitely step it up a notch. It means take it up some steps. For example, some days guys can wear a looser shirt that covers the *'awrah* instead of a tight shirt. Sisters, if you are wearing tighter clothes, then maybe a couple of times wear looser clothing *inshā'Allāh* and try to take steps. Religiosity is a personal thing, but at the same time we are told what it is. Someone can't come and tell you that you are not religious, but we can tell ourselves that. Look at the example of the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and measure yourself against that.

Don't Judge

[Br. AbdelRahman]: Also, another thing to remember during Ramaḍān is to not judge people. Many of us have the issue of judging others. If a person is changing during Ramaḍān, then be there for them and applaud their effort. We don't want to push them back to where they came from. Ramaḍān is like a rehab clinic for people who have problems, and all of us have problems. We are all trying to get better. Don't ever be the person to push someone back. Be there for each other. We all need help.

Siyām is like a medicine for the problems that we have. When do you take medicine? When you are sick, and we are all sick. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta āla*) is telling us to take medicine. When we fast, Ramaḍān ends up being like a rehab clinic. For 11 months out of the year we have these problems, and then we all show up to this clinic together and pray *tarawīḥ* together and fast together. You have to work in groups, and don't ever push anyone outside of the group because



they are trying to get better. If you push them out, then you might have to answer for why they didn't get better

[Ḥāfiẓ Wisam]: Both of us want to say something to you guys. You have to realize that if you are going to go to an exclusive restaurant or basketball game, you have to realize that there are others there before you. When you go to the *masjid* and someone older than you says something to you, realize that out of the eleven months that Ramaḍān wasn't around, those older people were in the *masjid*, and all of a sudden you decided to become religious. The world is going to give you a little bit of a tough time. Give the moms and dads and aunties and uncles a little bit of a break. If they roll their eyes at you or look at you up and down, smile at them. It is a month of *ṣadaqah*. You can't show up to the *masjid* and be like 'accept me for who I am.' No one is going to know how much you are doing except Allāh. Allāh might test you with the uncle who is telling you not to talk in the *masjid* or the auntie asking you why you are wearing what you are wearing. Say: *inshā'Allāh* I am trying.

Horses, Cattle & Land

[Ḥāfiẓ Wisam]: The next two points of the *āyah* are straightforward. The well-branded horses and horses of high mark – Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta 'āla*) is telling us that made beautiful is everything of this world and well-branded horses. What is the icon for a Ferrari? The standing stallion. Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta 'āla*) knows that we love these things.

My Ramaḍān resolution is going to be to tackle this and try not to watch the automotive section of YouTube and try to not watch YouTube at all because I watch a lot of clips on YouTube since I'm traveling a lot. That's my Ramaḍān resolution.

The other two things are cattle and land. Rasūlullāh (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) gave us a reminder of how much to eat. What do we do with cattle? We farm the land and eat from it or we eat the cow. Food is going to be exotic. I was just telling Br. AbdelRahman that I was just introduced to a personal trainer Rehan Jalali. He is going to give a talk in our *masjid* on July 30th on the importance of eating healthy in Ramaḍān. Some of us end up gaining weight in Ramaḍān or eating more food because we eat a lot during *iftār* time.

[Br. AbdelRahman]: The reminder you are giving is great. Tone it back and have self discipline.

[Ḥāfiẓ Wisam]: Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta 'āla*) reminds us to eat less and to control what you want to eat. When you hear the *adhān*, have a few dates and drink a little milk and then go pray *maghrib*. Don't eat a whole *iftār* and then pray *maghrib* and then eat dinner because you won't have *ṣalāt'l-tarawīḥ*. Have a few dates and a glass of milk, some juice or something light to eat, but don't make the first thing you eat after your stomach has been empty for 16 hours something fried because your body will absorb it immediately.

The last thing is to acquire more and more land. Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta 'āla*) says that all this may be enjoyed in the life of this world, but with Allāh are more beautiful spouses in Jannah and more beautiful gold and silver, and the cups of Jannah will be beautiful diamond and emerald encrusted gold cups. We can have this if we act according to what Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta 'āla*) wants from us.



[Br. AbdelRahman]: *Jazāk Allāh khayr, Ḥāfiẓ Wisam*. This *āyah* hits it on the head. I want to thank you on behalf of everyone else, and I know that you are busy in SoCal. It really benefited me as well as the rest of the audience.

A Reminder

[Br. AbdelRahman]: Just a reminder I want to reiterate: what is interesting about Ramaḍān is the things that Allāh takes away from us. If we ask ourselves what are the things we can't do during the daylight hours, the biggest ones are food, drink, and intimate relations with our spouse. What is interesting is asking: are these things normally permissible for us during the daylight hours of the year? The answer is yes. We can normally eat all we want and drink all we want and enjoy our spouses all we want. What is interesting is why Allāh chooses these few things.

There are two reasons that the scholars say. The first is really motivational and will really pump us up and that is this: Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta'āla*) takes away things that are *ḥalāl* for us to enable us to prove to ourselves that we can stay away from the *ḥarām*. Staying away from the *ḥalāl* is difficult because we are used to having them. People who don't pray five times a day make sure to stay away from food during Ramaḍān. Chain smokers do not pick up a cigarette during the daylight hours. This shows us that we can definitely stay away from everything else.

The other point is beautiful. When we are eating and drinking, we are taking care of our body and satiating our needs. If we hold back from that food and drink, then we are no longer taking care of those desires and feel hunger and thirst. When you get hungry or thirsty, can you ever tell your stomach to shut up? It is impossible. When you have these other desires, you can convince yourself no. When you are missing food and drink, you can't tell yourself no. How does it relate to fasting and *taqwa*? Allāh is showing us that in the same way you can't tell your stomach to be quiet, this is the same amount of reflection we should have towards Allāh. Your stomach cannot stop thinking about food. We are supposed to equate the hunger and thirst with how hungry and thirsty we are for a relationship with God. That is what is supposed to motivate us towards Allāh. When you have that feeling of hunger and thirst, also say this phrase: I can't wait until Jannah, and I can't wait until I meet Allāh. That is what our hunger and thirst is pushing us towards.

I hope all of us benefitted.

[Ḥāfiẓ Wisam]: If you can stay away from *ḥalāl* things and whatever Allāh has made allowed for you during 11 months, then you will be able to stay away from *ḥarām* things.

Ḥāfiẓ Wisam Sharieff and Br. Abdelrahman Murphy – Day 3 @ RamadanPrep.com

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