

## **READ SLOWLY**

Dear Sisters,

It has been a year since we last met. I hope you have been well.

Are you ready for me? I am waiting for your voice – looking forward to hearing it as it ripples sound waves of Quran over and through my minutes and seconds.

Are you ready for me? I am waiting for your longing – looking forward to responding to your beating heart with my gifts.

Are you ready for me? I am waiting for your charity – looking forward to the smiles of all who receive of your generosity.

Are you ready for me? I am waiting for your prayers – looking forward to supporting you in long minutes of standing, bowing, and pleading with your Lord.

Are you ready for me? I am waiting for your tears – looking forward to each splash of taubah as it mixes with the fibers of hope that I provide.

As usual, I have packed in the corners of my bags some special treats, just for you.

During the first ten days of my visit, I will present to you a daily gift of mercy. Mercy is what you have when you deal gently with your younger sibling, mercy is what you show when you forgive your fellow sister's mistakes. I do not bring you the mercy of humanity, however, I bring you Allah's mercy. I bring you the overlooking of your sins... Every single day I will offer it to you and hope that you take it from my outstretched hand...

In the second ten days of my visit – I will have a new gift: the gift of forgiveness. You will find that these days are a little more difficult than the previous ones – but do not give up! Forgiveness! On any one of these days you could be forgiven for all your past sins. Forgiveness. Could your book be wiped clean? Yes! For that is what forgiveness is. Every day of the second ten days I will place a beautifully wrapped box on the shelf. You have only to call out for it in repentance and it will be yours.

Finally, on the last ten days, I will have the greatest gift of all: freedom from hellfire. How, you might ask, can I offer such a gift? I offer you great and deep change. When you change in such a way, you remove the chains that are chaining you to hell fire. If you accept this gift from me, you will have changed deeply – you will have turned away from your past sins and bad habits and began to carve out a new future – a future that has no fear of hell fire, and hopes for paradise and the pleasure of your Lord.

I have missed you so much. All these long months I thought about you, and remembered how we spent the time together last year. I remember a little too much time spent sleeping, a few too many hours in front of the screen, and not quite enough Quran. A couple of times you missed tahajjud, and once you missed taraweeh. Still, last year was better than the previous year... we won't even talk about that.

I have great hopes for us this year. I am imagining us together – hand in hand all month, with Angel Jibreel himself shaking your hand in congratulations at the Eid prayer.

Before I get there, lets make a schedule, a plan. Let's think about how much Quran you are going to read this month, and how many rak`as of prayer you will pray daily. Let's think about how many people you will feed, and how you will help those around you to benefit from me as well.

Remember, I come but once a year. Every moment and second that I am with you is important. I am here.

Are you ready?

Love, Ramadan

*Things to think about:*

1. What is mercy and why is it important?
2. Think of 3 ways you can show mercy today
3. Why are the days of forgiveness a little harder than previous?
4. What changes are you hoping AND planning for this Ramadan?