



MAKING RAMADĀN FRUITFUL

Shaykhul-Ḥadīth, Mawlānā
Muhammad Saleem Dhorat
ḥafīzahullāh



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The ‘Ulamā have stated that how we spend the whole week depends on how we spend the day of Jumu‘ah. If we spend the day of Jumu‘ah in obedience to Allāh ﷻ, then through the barakah of this Allāh ﷻ will grant us the ability to remain steadfast throughout the week. Similarly, how we spend the whole year depends on how we spend the month of Ramaḍān. If we value the blessed month of Ramaḍān, we will witness the positive effects of this throughout the year. We will be able to obey Allāh ﷻ and seek His Pleasure in the remaining eleven months. This will then have a knock-on effect upon the following Ramaḍān which in turn, will secure the year after. If this cycle continues, we will remain obedient to Allāh ﷻ throughout our lives and depart from this world with the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. We will be given the glad tidings:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ اْزْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَأَدْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي

﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٣٠﴾

O the content soul! Return to your Rabb, in a state that you are pleased with Him and He is pleased with you. Enter among my (chosen) servants and enter my Jannah. (89:27-30)

The question is how do we value the month of Ramaḍān? The answer is by making sure we do not waste a single moment of this blessed and precious month.

Wasting Precious Moments

Wasting precious moments of life in the form of either disobedience to Allāh ﷻ or lā ya'nī (futile activities) is the greatest loss a mu'min (believer) can incur. Therefore, in order to save ourselves from this loss, we need to monitor ourselves and make sure we do not engage in any disobedience to Allāh ﷻ or lā ya'nī. This is the golden rule which we need to hold fast to throughout our lives, but it becomes all the more important during blessed moments like Ramaḍān.

In order to do this, one must stay in good company and good environment and abstain from bad company and bad environment. Company and environment are the two factors that influence a person most, thus we need to be wary of them and choose them correctly. If we adopt good company and remain in good environment, we will feel inclined to do good; and if we do the contrary, we will feel inclined to do bad. Furthermore, whilst keeping ourselves in good company and good environment, we should endeavor to mix with others as less as possible. This is because unnecessary mixing leads to gossip and useless talk which then leads to committing sins such as backbiting, ridiculing and slandering.

It should be borne in mind that activities on the mobile phone and other electronic devices such as conversing with people via call or text, communicating through messaging apps, scrolling through different social media platforms, watching videos, listening to audios, reading articles or e-books are all somewhat equivalent to company. Unfortunately, for many of us, these devices become a means of bad company or bad environment and we waste precious moments of our lives and often disobey Allāh ﷻ. Therefore, we should be very mindful in this regard and avoid unnecessary usage of the mobile phone and other electronic devices, especially in the blessed month of Ramaḍān, and more so during the nights. If we are unable to engage in ‘ibādah then we should retire to bed rather than putting ourselves at risk of sin. Sleeping is a fort that saves us from committing sins.

Important Guidelines for Ramaḍān

The above forms the foundation of a fruitful Ramaḍān. In addition to this, we must hold fast to a few points which are important throughout our lives, but hold extra importance when it comes to Ramaḍān:

1. Fasting is from the five fundamental pillars of Islām. During the month of Ramaḍān, one of the gravest disobediences we can possibly commit is to neglect fasting; and this sin becomes all the more severe when

we become bold by openly declaring to people, either verbally or practically, that we are not fasting. If someone was to keep optional fasts his entire life, it will not compensate for even one fast that he missed during Ramaḍān. Thus, we should endeavor not to neglect even a single fast during this blessed month.

Those who feel that they have a valid shar‘ī reason for not fasting should consult a qualified doctor for health advice and then refer to a Muftī to get proper shar‘ī guidance. If one is excused from fasting during Ramaḍān but can fast during shorter days, he should make up for the missed fasts in those days. If one is unable to fast at all, then he should give fidyah for his missed fasts as soon as possible so that he is absolved of this great responsibility. Women who miss fasts due to menstruation should resolve to make up for their fasts as soon as possible, preferably straight after Ramaḍān.

2. Perform the five daily ṣalāh punctually. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ صَلَاتُهُ

Indeed, the first action the servant will be taken to account for on the Day of Qiyyamah is his ṣalāh. (At-Tirmidhī)

It is sunnah mu’akkadah for men to perform ṣalāh with jamā‘ah in the masjid.

3. Increase spending in the Path of Allāh ﷺ. If one's zakāh date falls in Ramaḍān or if one has outstanding zakāh, he should make sure he gives his zakāh in this blessed month. It should be borne in mind that those whose zakāh date is out of Ramaḍān should not delay discharging zakāh until Ramaḍān; they should try to discharge their zakāh as soon as possible. Along with discharging zakāh, we should all give optional ṣadaqah generously, as Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said,

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَجْوَدَ النَّاسِ، وَأَجْوَدُ مَا يَكُونُ فِي رَمَضَانَ

Nabī ؐ was the most generous of people, and he would be most generous during Ramaḍān. (Al-Bukhārī)

Rasūlullāh ؐ has mentioned many virtues and benefits of ṣadaqah. One great benefit promised by Rasūlullāh ؐ is the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and a good demise. Rasūlullāh ؐ said,

إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ لِتُطْفِئَ غَضَبَ الرَّبِّ وَتَذْفَعُ مِيتَةَ السُّوءِ

Indeed, ṣadaqah extinguishes the Anger of the Rabb, and repels a bad death (At-Tirmidhī)

Therefore, we should spend wholeheartedly for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ on the various charitable projects available. In the month of Ramaḍān, we have a great opportunity to arrange for iḥṭā which is a very virtuous form of spending too. Rasūlullāh ؐ said,

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

Whoever gives a fasting person something to break his fast with, then for him will be reward equivalent to his (i.e., the fasting person's reward), without it decreasing anything from the reward of the fasting person. (At-Tirmidhī)

Ḥammād ibn Abī Sulaymān ؓ would feed 500 people for ifṭār daily during the month of Ramaḍān. (Siyaru A'lāmin-Nubalā')


4. Recite the Glorious Qur'ān in abundance. Upon the advent of Ramaḍān, Ibn Shihāb Az-Zuhri ؓ would say,


إِنَّمَا هُوَ تِلَاوَةُ الْقُرْآنِ وَإِطْعَامُ الطَّعَامِ


It (Ramaḍān) is nothing but the tilāwah of the Qur'ān and feeding others. (At-Tamhīd libni 'Abdil-Barr)


Imām Mālik ؓ and Sufyān Thawrī ؓ would both leave aside all other activities such as teaching and lecturing during Ramaḍān, and fully dedicate themselves to the tilāwah of the Qur'ān. (Laṭā'iful-Ma'ārif) During this blessed month, we should try to dedicate as much time as possible for the recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān whilst making sure we give importance to both quality and quantity. Non-Ḥuffāz should recite at least three juz a day and Ḥuffāz should recite at least five juz a day.

The pious predecessors accomplished astonishing feats in their recitation during the blessed month of Ramaḍān.

Imām Bukhārī  used to complete the Qur’ān 41 times in the month of Ramaḍān; once every day, once during the whole month in the tarāwīḥ prayer and ten juz daily in tahajjud ṣalāh. (Hadyus-Sārī)

Imām Shāfi’ī  would complete the Qur’ān twice daily during Ramaḍān. (Siyaru A’lāmin-Nubalā’)

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah  would also complete the Qur’ān twice daily in the month of Ramaḍān, whilst he would also complete the Qur’ān one more time during the night of ‘Īd and yet again during the day. (Akhhbāru Abī Ḥanīfata wa Aṣḥābiḥī)

Shaykhul-Ḥadīth, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā  would complete one Qur’ān daily during the month of Ramaḍān. (Taḥḍīthe Ni‘mat) And he writes regarding the womenfolk of his home that along with their household chores, they would recite 15 to 20 juz daily. (Faḍā’ile A‘māl)

5. Perform the tahajjud ṣalāh. During the month of Ramaḍān, it is easier to perform tahajjud in the last portion of the night. When waking up to partake of suḥūr, we should wake up slightly earlier and perform a

few raka'āt of tahajjud, preferably eight raka'āt. The practice of our Beloved Nabī ﷺ was to perform eight raka'āt of tahajjud throughout the year, including Ramaḍān.

6. Engage in du'ā and dhikrullāh in abundance. We should value the special moments of Ramaḍān and make as much du'ā as possible; whilst fasting, at the time of ifṭār, at the time of tahajjud, after the farḍ ṣalāh, after reciting the Qur'ān, etc. We should also set aside some time daily exclusively for du'ā and beg Allāh ﷻ for all our needs of this world and the Hereafter. Similarly, whilst carrying out our daily tasks like writing a letter, reading a book, embarking on a journey, preparing for sleep or doing any other task, we should ask Allāh ﷻ for assistance and barakah.

Similarly, engage in the dhikr of Allāh ﷻ as much as possible. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

لَا يَزَالُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْبًا مِمَّنْ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

Your tongue should remain moist with the dhikr of Allāh, Most Honored and Exalted He is... (At-Tirmidhī)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructed us to carry out four virtuous acts abundantly in Ramaḍān: Read 'Lā ilāha illallāh', ask Allāh ﷻ for forgiveness, ask Allāh ﷻ for Jannah and seek refuge from Jahannam. (Ibn Ḥibbān) My late

father ﷺ taught me a formula in my childhood which consists of all four things:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ، أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ

There is no deity but Allāh; I seek forgiveness from Allāh; (O Allāh!) I ask You for Jannah and seek Your refuge from the fire of Jahannam.

Let us follow this instruction of our Beloved Nabī ﷺ by reciting the above abundantly in Ramaḍān.

7. Repent from all previous sins. In the month of Ramaḍān, tawbah and istighfār should increase significantly and we should make firm resolutions never to return to sins again. This is the essence of taqwā which is the main purpose and goal of Ramaḍān. Allāh ﷻ states,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

﴿١٨٣﴾

O you who believe! The fasts have been enjoined upon you as they were enjoined upon those before you, so that you may adopt taqwā. (2:183)

8. Carry out as many good deeds as possible, along with the acts of worship already mentioned e.g., assisting others, charity work, da‘wah work, etc. However, we should maintain moderation in this regard. Many of us

become obsessed with such activities during Ramaḍān to the extent that the main acts of worship of this blessed month are neglected. Although these activities are rewarding, time should be stipulated for them in such a manner that the important duties of Ramaḍān are not neglected and everything is given its due right.

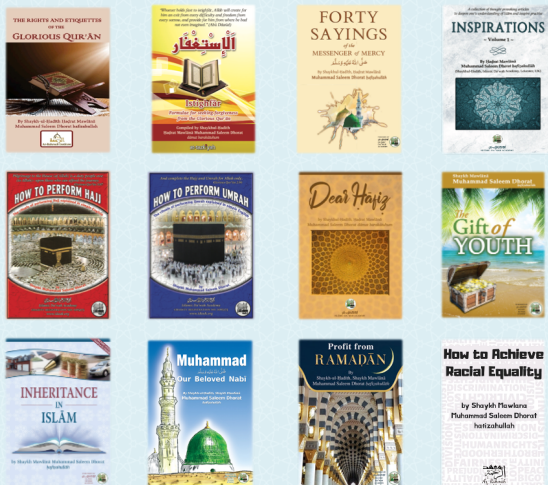
9. Reflect upon the past. We should allocate ten to fifteen minutes daily to think about our past and ask ourselves: What is the purpose of my creation? What have I done so far to secure success in the life Hereafter? How will I fare in the Hereafter? What are my shortcomings? How is my relationship with the Creator? If the Angel of Death was to come at this moment, am I prepared to go? As a result of reflection, we should acknowledge our shortcomings and make resolutions to improve. We should ask Allāh ﷻ for His Help, as without it we cannot succeed.
10. Finally, we should never become despondent if we find ourselves failing in our endeavors during this blessed month. If due to negligence we waste some days of Ramaḍān, despondency will only make it worse and result in neglect during the remaining days too. Therefore, we need to keep our hopes high believing that Allāh the Most-Merciful will grant us tawfīq. With

this hope, we should try even harder in the remaining days in order to make up for the loss we have incurred.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us the tawfīq to act upon all the above points and thereby make our Ramaḍān fruitful. Āmīn.

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Other Publications by the Author



Ar-Rahmah Institute
 62 Colonial Drive, Farmingdale, NY, 11735
 Tel: (516) 900-2112
 Email: arrahmahusa@gmail.com