

MAKING RAMADĀN FRUITFUL

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ḥafizahullāh



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 ﷺ, then through the barakah of this Allāh ﷺ 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 ﷺ 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 ﷺ throughout our lives and depart from this world with the Pleasure of Allāh ﷺ. We will be given the glad tidings:

يَا أَيُّهَا التَّفْسُّ الْمُطَمِّنَةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ إِنْجُوْيَ إِلَيْ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلْنِي فِي عِبْدِيْ
﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلْنِي بَخَيْتِي ﴿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 Ramadān? 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 ﷺ or lā ya‘nī (futile activities) is the greatest loss a mu’mín (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 ﷺ 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 Ramadān.

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 ﷺ. 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 Ramadān. Thus, we should endeavor not to neglect even a single fast during this blessed month.

Those who feel that they have a valid sharī' reason for not fasting should consult a qualified doctor for health advice and then refer to a Muftī to get proper sharī' guidance. If one is excused from fasting during Ramadān 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 Ramadān.

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

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا يُحْسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ صَلَاتُهُ

Indeed, the first action the servant will be taken to account for on the Day of Qiyāmah 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 ﷺ said,

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَجْوَدُ الْأَنْسِ. وَأَجْوَدُ مَا يَكُونُ فِي رَمَضَانَ

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

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

إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ لَتُطْفِئُ نَحْسَبَ الرَّبِّ وَتَنْفَعُ مِنْتَهَةَ 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 ﷺ on the various charitable projects available. In the month of Ramaḍān, we have a great opportunity to arrange for iftār which is a very virtuous form of spending too. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

مَنْ فَطَّرَ صَائِمًا كَانَ لَهُ مُثْلٌ أَجْرًا. غَيْرُ أَنَّهُ لَا يَنْفَعُ 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)

Hammād ibn Abī Sulaymān ﷺ would feed 500 people for iftār 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-Zuhrī ﷺ would say,

إِنَّمَا هُوَ تِلَاوَةُ الْقُرْآنِ وَإِطْعَامُ الطَّاغَامِ

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

Imām Mālik ﷺ and Sufyān Thawrī ﷺ 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-Huffāz should recite at least three juz a day and Huffāz 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 ﷺ used to complete the Qur’ān 41 times in the month of Ramaḍān; once every day, once during the whole month in the tarāwīh prayer and ten juz daily in tahajjud ṣalāh. (Hadyus-Sārī)

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

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ 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. (Akhbāru Abī Ḥanīfata wa Aṣḥābihī)

Shaykhul-Hadīth, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ﷺ would complete one Qur’ān daily during the month of Ramaḍān. (Taḥdīth 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 suhūr, 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 Ramadān.

6. Engage in du'ā and dhikrullāh in abundance. We should value the special moments of Ramadān and make as much du'ā as possible; whilst fasting, at the time of iftār, at the time of tahajjud, after the fard ṣalāh, after reciting the Qur'ān, etc. We should also set aside some time daily exclusively for du'ā and beg Allāh ﷺ 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 ﷺ for assistance and barakah.

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

لَا يَرْبَأُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْبًا مِّنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ 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 Ramadān: Read 'Lā ilāha illallāh', ask Allāh ﷺ for forgiveness, ask Allāh ﷺ for Jannah and seek refuge from Jahannam. (Ibn Hibbān) 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 وَأَخْوَذُ 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 Ramadān.

7. Repent from all previous sins. In the month of Ramadān, 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 Ramadān. Allāh ﷺ states,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذْ كُبِّرَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِيَامُ كَمَا كُبِّرَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَكُمْ تَعْقُلُونَ

﴿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.

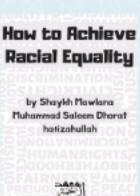
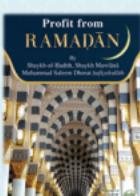
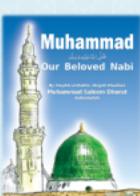
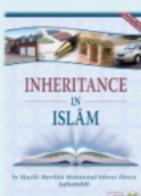
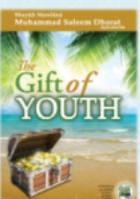
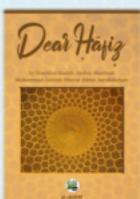
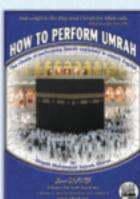
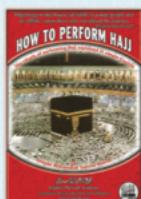
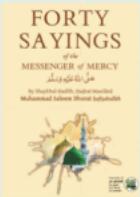
9. Reflect upon the past. We should allocate ten to fifteen minutes daily to think about our past and ask ourselves: What is the purpose of my creation? What have I done so far to secure success in the life Hereafter? How will I fare in the Hereafter? What are my shortcomings? How is my relationship 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 ﷺ 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 tawfiq. 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 ﷺ grant us the tawfiq to act upon all the above points and thereby make our Ramadān fruitful. Āmīn.

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