



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS THE MOST MERCIFUL

RAMADAN – COMMON MISTAKES (2019)

Allah has given one whole month in Ramadan as an opportunity for us to enter Jannah. Yet many people fail to take advantage of this Blessed month and will treat it the same as in other months. Some people will take it ONLY as a ritual of a month without eating or drinking during day lights. Worse still, some people are NOT looking forward to this Blessed month and are dreading the hunger and thirst.

Remember the hadith when prophet Muhammad SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam said Ameen 3 times:

Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, ascended the pulpit and he said, “**Amīn, amīn, amīn.**” It was said, “O Messenger of Allah, you ascended the pulpit and said amīn, amīn, amīn.” The Prophet said, “**Verily, Gabriel came to me and he said: Whoever reaches the month of Ramadan and he is not forgiven, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say amīn. I said amīn. Whoever sees his parents in their old age, one or both of them, and he does not honor them and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say amīn. I said amīn. Whoever has your name mentioned in his presence and he does not send blessings upon you and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say amīn. I said amīn.**”

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān 915

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Albani.

Remember another hadith - a sahabah dreamt that he saw one person who experienced one extra Ramadan entered Jannah earlier than one who died as a martyr one year earlier:

The great companion Talha bin 'Ubaidullah (radyAllahu 'anhu) narrated that two men came to the Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) and became Muslim together. After accepting Islam one of them would strive harder than the other. The one who used to strive harder went out to fight in the way of Allah and was martyred. The other man who accepted Islam at the same time as the martyr lived a year longer, then he also passed away.

Later Talha reported that he saw in a dream that he was at the gate of Paradise and he saw those two men that had died. Then through the gates of Paradise someone came out and admitted the one who had died last into Jannah, then he came out again and admitted the one who died first as a martyr. Then he came back to Talha and said: 'Go back, for your time has not yet come.'

The next morning, Talha told the people of the dream and they were amazed. News of that reached the Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) and they told him the story.

The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Why are you so amazed at that?"

They said: "O Messenger of Allah, the first one was the one who strove harder, and he died a martyr in the cause of Allah, but the other man (who didn't strive as hard and was not a martyr) was admitted to Paradise before him?"

The Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Did he (the second man) not live for another year?" They said: "Yes."

The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) asked: "And did not Ramadan come and he fasted, and he offered such and such prayers during that year?" They said: "Yes."

The Messenger of Allah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "The difference between them is greater than the difference between the heaven and the earth." ~ [Collected by Ibn Majah]

All the above hadeeths point out to one thing - a window of opportunity will arrive inshaAllah in 5 weeks time - an opportunity to seek forgiveness from Allah, do righteous good deeds and enter Jannah inshaAllah.

Let us first look at the common mistakes which are made by many people - so that inshaAllah we will not do them.

PRE-RAMADAN

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali mentions in *Lata'if al-Ma'arif*:

The month of Rajab is the key to the months of goodness and blessings that follow it. Abu Bakr b. al-Warraaq al-Balkhi said: "Rajab is the month to sow the seeds; Sha'ban is the month to irrigate the crop; and Ramadan is the month to reap the harvest."

BUT many people make the same mistakes year after year:

1. Fail to seek knowledge – especially on making du'a for Allah to allow us to meet Ramadan.
2. Fail to prepare
 - i. Spiritually
 - Correct the prayers
 - Improve Qur'an recitation
 - Memorise the Qur'an
 - Seek for Allah's Forgiveness
 - Make du'a for Guidance and strength
 - ii. Physically
 - Doing voluntary fasting – especially in month of Sha'ban

Al-Bukhaari (1970) and Muslim (1156) narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to fast all of Sha'baan, he used to fast Sha'baan except a few days." This version was narrated by Muslim.

BUT TAKE NOTE:

Abu Dawood (3237), al-Tirmidhi (738) and Ibn Naajah (1651) narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When Sha'baan is half over, do not fast." Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh al-Tirmidhi*, 590.

This hadeeth indicates that it is not allowed to fast after halfway through Sha'baan, i.e., starting from the sixteenth day of the month.

But there are reports that indicate that it is permissible to fast at this time. For example:

Al-Bukhaari (1914) and Muslim (1082) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Do not anticipate Ramadaan by fasting one or two days before it begins, but if a man habitually fasts, then let him fast."

So, in conclusion

- i. if you want to do voluntary fast, fast from beginning of Sha'ban;
- ii. by 15 Sha'ban if you have not started voluntary fasting then you shouldn't start fasting;
- iii. Do NOT fast a few days before Ramadan

- Control diet
- Exercise

3. Fail to repay back the missed fast
4. Fail to take leave from working in the last 10 days of Ramadan

DURING RAMADAN

1 : Taking Ramadaan as a ritual

For many of us Ramadaan has lost its spirituality and has become more of a ritual than a form of Ibaadah. We fast from morning to night like a zombie just because everyone around us is fasting too. We forget that it's a time to purify our hearts and our souls from all evil....we forget to make dua, forget to beseech Allah to forgive us and ask Him to save us from the Fire. Sure we stay away from food and drink, but that's about all.

2 : Too much stress on food and drink

For some people, the entire month of Ramadaan revolves around food. They spend the ENTIRE day planning, cooking, shopping and thinking about food, instead of concentrating on Salah, Quran and other acts of worship. All they can think of is FOOD. So much so that they turn the month of fasting into the month of feasting. Come Iftaar time, their table is a sight to see, with the multitudes and varieties of food, sweets and drinks. They are missing the very purpose of fasting, and thus, increase in their greed and desires instead of learning to control them. It is also a kind of waste & extravagance. ".....and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not Al-Musrifoon (those who waste by extravagance)" [al-Araaf :31]

3 : Spending all day cooking

Some of the sisters (either by their own choice or forced by their husbands) are cooking ALL day and ALL night, so that by the end of the day, they are too tired to even pray Isha, let alone pray Taraweeh or Tahajjud or even read Quran. This is the month of mercy and forgiveness. So turn off that stove and turn on your Imaan!

4 : Eating too much

Some people stuff themselves at Suhoor until they are ready to burst, because they think this is the way to not feel hungry during the day and others eat at Iftaar like there is no tomorrow, trying to make up for the food missed. However, this is completely against the Sunnah. Moderation is the key to everything. The Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) said: "The son of Adam does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach; for the son of Adam a few mouthfuls are sufficient to keep his back straight. If you must fill it, then one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for air." (Tirmidhi) Too much food distracts a person from many deeds of obedience and worship, makes him lazy and also makes the heart heedless. It was said to Imam Ahmad: Does a man find any softness and humility in his heart when he is full? He said, I do not think so.

5 : Sleeping all day

Some people spend their entire day (or a major part of it) sleeping away their fast. Is this what is really required of us during this noble month? These people

also are missing the purpose of fasting and are slaves to their desires of comfort and ease. They cannot bear to be awake and face a little hunger or exert a little self-control. For a fasting person to spend most of the day asleep is nothing but, negligence on his part.

6 : Wasting time

The month of Ramadan is a precious, precious time, so much so that Allah calls this month "Ayyamum Madoodaat" (A fixed number of days). Before we know it, this month of mercy and forgiveness will be over. We should try and spend every moment possible in the worship of Allah so that we can make the most of this blessing. However, there are some of us who waste away their day playing video games, or worse still, watching TV, movies or even listening to music. Subhaan Allaah! Trying to obey Allah by DISOBEYING Him!

7 : Fasting but not giving up evil

Some of us fast but do not give up lying, cursing, fighting, backbiting, etc. and some of us fast but do not give up cheating, stealing, dealing in haraam, buying lotto tickets, selling alcohol, fornication, etc. and all kinds of impermissible things without realizing that the purpose of fasting is to not stay away from food and drink; rather the aim behind it is to fear Allah. "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)" [al-Baqarah 2:183]

The Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Whoever does not give up false speech and acting upon it, and ignorance, Allah has no need of him giving up his food and drink." (Bukhari)

8 : Skipping Suhoor

The Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Eat suhoor for in suhoor there is blessing." (Bukhari, Muslim). And he (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "The thing that differentiates between our fasting and the fasting of the People of the Book is eating suhoor." (Muslim)

9 : Stopping Suhoor at Imsak

Some people stop eating Suhoor 10-15 minutes earlier than the time of Fajr to observe Imsak. Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen said: This is a kind of bidah (innovation) which has no basis in the Sunnah. Rather the Sunnah is to do the opposite. Allah allows us to eat until dawn: "and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)" [al-Baqarah 2:187]

10 : Not fasting if they missed Suhoor

Some people are too scared to fast if they miss Suhoor. However, this is a kind of cowardice and love of ease. What is the big deal if you missed a few morsels of food? It's not like you will die. Remember, obedience to Allah overcomes everything.

11 : Saying the intention to fast out loud

The intention is an action of the heart. We should resolve in our heart that we are going to fast tomorrow. That is all we need. It is not prescribed by the Shari'ah for us to say out loud, "I intend to fast", "I will fast tomorrow" or other phrases that have been innovated by some people.

12 : Missing the golden chance of having your Dua accepted

The prayer of the fasting person is guaranteed to be accepted at the time of breaking fast. The Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) said: "Three prayers are not rejected: the prayer of a father, the prayer of a fasting person, and the prayer of a traveler." (Al-Bayhaqi). Instead of sitting down and making Dua at this precious time, some people forego this beautiful chance, and are too busy frying samosas, talking, setting the food, filling their plates and glasses, etc. Think about it....Is food more important than the chance to have your sins forgiven or the fulfillment of your Duas.

13 : Fasting but not praying

The fasting of one who does not pray WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. This is because not praying constitutes kufr as the Prophet (SAW) said: "Between a man and shirk and kufr there stands his giving up prayer." (Muslim)

14 : Not fasting because of exams or work

Exams or work is NOT one of the excuses allowed by the Shariah to not fast. You can do your studying and revision at night if it is too hard to do that during the day. Also remember that pleasing and obeying Allah is much more important than good grades. Besides, if you will fulfil your obligation to fast, even if you have to study, Allah will make it easy for you and help you in everything you do. "Whosoever fears Allah, He will appoint for him a way out and provide for him from where he does not expect, Allah is Sufficient for whosoever puts his trust in Him." (Surah at-Talaaq 2-3)

15 : Mixing fasting and dieting

DO NOT make the mistake of fasting with the intention to diet. That is one of the biggest mistakes some of us make (especially sisters). Fasting is an act of worship and can only be for the sake of Allah alone. Otherwise, mixing it with the intention of dieting may become a form of (minor) Shirk.

16 : Fighting over the number of Rakaah of Taraweeh

There is no specific number of rakahs for Taraweeh prayer, rather it is permissible to do a little or a lot. Both 8 and 20 are okay. Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen said: "No one should be denounced for praying eleven or twenty-three (rakaah), because the matter is broader in scope than that, praise be to Allah."

17 : Praying Qiyam al layl ONLY on the night of the 27th

Some people pray ONLY on the 27th to seek Lailat ul-Qadr, neglecting all other odd nights, although the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) said: "Seek Lailat ul-Qadr among the odd numbered nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan." (Bukhari, Muslim)

18 : Wasting the last part of Ramadan preparing for Eid

Some people waste the entire last 10 days of Ramadan preparing for Eid, shopping and frequenting malls, etc. neglecting Ibadah and Lailatul Qadr. Although, the Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to strive the hardest during the last ten days of Ramadan in worship (Ahmad, Muslim) and not in shopping. Buy whatever you need for Eid before Ramadan so that you can utilize the time in Ramadan to the max. Aishah (RA) said: "When the (last) ten nights began, the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would tighten his waist-wrapper (i.e., strive hard in worship or refrain from intimacy with his wives), stay awake at night and wake his family." (Bukhari and Muslim)

19 : Iftaar parties

Although inviting each other for breaking fast is something good and encouraged, some people go to extremes with lavish Iftaar parties with all sorts of disobedience to Allah, from flirting, mixing of the sexes, to show-off and extravagance, to heedlessness to Salah and Taraweeh.

20. Concentrate on terawih, but completely lax with isha and fajr prayer – some even missed Isha prayer and wake up late for Fajr prayer.

POST RAMADAN

Since we strive to strengthen our bodies with both the physical and mental power that we need to complete our fasts, let's take that a step further and make it last throughout the year. It takes real devotion to Allah to fast for His sake only. There is a hadith narrated by Sufyaan ibn 'Abdallah (RA) who said, "O Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam), tell me something about Islam, which I cannot ask anyone else besides you." He (SAW) replied, "Say, 'I believe in Allah' and then be steadfast (upon that)." Saheeh Muslim

This hadith is proof that we are obligated, after having faith in Allah, to be steadfast in obeying Allah by performing the obligatory acts and avoiding the prohibited ones. This is achieved by following the Straight Path, which is Islam. If a Muslim lives through Ramadan and spent his days in fasting and his nights

in prayer and he accustomed himself to doing acts of good, then he must continue to remain upon this obedience to Allah at all times.

In fact, steadfastness after Ramadan is the greatest sign that one has gained benefit from the month of Ramadan. These are the real signs of a successful Ramadan. Furthermore, the deeds of a Muslim do not come to an end with the end of Ramadan. Rather, they continue and extend throughout the year. Allah (SWT) says, "*And worship your Lord until the certainty (death) comes to you.*" (Al Hjr; 99)

Means of Ongoing Obedience

First, be a Rabbani, not Ramadani!

Some pious people used to say: "Try to be a Rabbani (belonging to Allah always), and do not be a Ramadani (only worshipping Allah in Ramadan)." We do not worship Almighty Allah only in Ramadan; we have to worship and serve Him every day of our lives.

Muslims must continually do good deeds. We have to observe our daily prayers, fast during Ramadan, give zakah, and perform Hajj if we can afford it. We should also speak the truth, be honest, and treat each other and all human beings with courtesy and kindness. Remember that good deeds lead to more good deeds and bad deeds only lead to more bad deeds. It is said: "One of the rewards of good deeds is more good deeds after that, and one the consequences of evil is more evil deeds after that."

Second, consistently doing good deeds is a sign of sincerity.

When people do something good and then do more good, it means that they really benefited from their good actions and that Almighty Allah accepted their good deeds. However, when someone prays, fasts, does some acts of charity, and then stops doing these things, this means that from the beginning his intention was not good. He was not sincere in his good deeds. The Prophet Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam always stressed the fact that the best good deeds in the sight of Almighty Allah are those that are done consistently, even if they are very few.

Islam is the religion of purity and sincerity. This applies to all the seasons of the year; not only to Ramadan.

Allah the Lord of Ramadan is also the Lord of the entire year, thus, we should not confine our acts of worship to the month of Ramadan; instead, we should seize every chance to show humbleness, devotion and sincerity to Almighty Allah at all times, so that we may gain His pleasure.

Third, there are means to continue doing good deeds.

The following are some of these beneficial means that help us continue doing good after Ramadan:

1. Seek the support of Almighty Allah,, beseeching Him the Almighty to guide you to the right path and to help you remain steadfast in faith. Almighty Allah has praised the supplication of those who have been instructed soundly, when they said: [Our Lord! Cause not our hearts to stray after Thou hast guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Thy Presence. Lo! Thou, only Thou art the Bestower.] (Aal `Imran 3: 8)

2. Continue to observe optional fasting after Ramadan: We are encouraged in the Sunnah to observe optional fasting after the month of Ramadan. The days in which optional fasting are recommended are:
 - a) Fasting six days during the month of Shawwal
 - b) Fasting the day of `Arafah, Dhul-Hijjah 9, provided that the person is not performing Hajj
 - c) Fasting Muharram,10, and if possible the 9th and 11th days of the same month
 - d) Fasting as many days as possible during the month of Sha`ban
 - e) Fasting during the months of Rajab, Dhul-Qi`dah, Dhul-Hijjah
 - f) Fasting on Mondays and Thursdays
 - g) Fasting the 13th, 14th, and 15th of every lunar month

3. Continue offering the Tahajjud Prayer: During Ramadan we were accustomed to performing the Tahajjud Prayer, so after Ramadan, we should continue to offer it, even two rak`ahs. Praising the character of devout believers, Almighty Allah says (what means), [Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope"] . (As-Sajdah 32:16)

Likewise, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said: "It is highly recommended for you to observe Qiyam Al-Layl, for it was the practice of your righteous predecessors. Qiyam Al-Layl brings us close to Our Lord, atones for our sins, drives disease from the body, and puts a stop to transgression." (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) say, "There is an hour in the night, in which no Muslim individual will ask Allah for good in this world and the next without Him giving it to him, and that applies to every night." (Reported by Muslim)

Al-Hasan Al-Basri (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "We know of no harder act of worship than enduring through the night and offering our money." He was asked, "How is it that those who observe Qiyam Al-Layl are among the people with the most beautiful faces?" To this he replied,

“Because they commune with the Most Merciful and He clothes them in light from His light.”

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as having said: “Whoever wakes up at night and lets his wife do so in order to offer two rak`ahs, will be recorded amongst those who make much dhikr of Allah in that night.” (Reported by Abu Dawud)

4. Continue reading, listening and reflecting on the Qur’an: Through the month of Ramadan, we used to read, listen to and reflect on the Qur’an; therefore, we should not forsake it after Ramadan. The Qur’an describes the Prophet’s complaint to Almighty Allah because of his people forsaking the Qur’an: “And the Messenger has said, ‘O Lord, indeed my people have forsaken this Qur’an.’” (Al-Furqan 25:30) We should never forsake the Qur’an so that we would not be included in the Prophet’s complaint (peace and blessings be upon him).
5. Continue taking care of the poor and needy: In Ramadan, we used to feed the poor and take care of them. We paid zakat al-fitr to help them meet their needs; therefore, we have to continue caring about them after Ramadan.

Ramadan exposed us to hunger and thirst. After feeling the pangs of hunger and thirst we should be more sympathetic to the plight of millions of people who are less fortunate around the world. A true Muslim can never be apathetic about the suffering of others.

In a hadith qudsi (Divine Hadith) the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) narrated from Almighty Allah: "O Son of Adam, I asked you for food, yet you did not feed Me." The man will ask: How can I feed You when You are the Lord of the worlds? Allah will say, "Didn't you know My servant so-and-so was hungry and you did not feed him; didn't you know that if you were to feed him, you will find Me with him?" (Reported by Muslim)

6. Continue offering supererogatory acts of worship; do what you are most inclined to do and capable of doing regularly, even if it is little. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "O people! Do only those good deeds which you can do, for Allah does not get tired (of giving reward) till you get tired, and the best deeds to Allah are the consistent ones, even though they may be few."

7. Continue performing a lot of dhikr and ask Almighty Allah for forgiveness. This may seem insignificant, yet observing it regularly increases faith and strengthens the heart.

8. Continue avoiding all that has been prohibited: In Ramadan, we used to refrain from lawful things – such as food and drink – during the daytime. We have been sufficiently trained to maintain self-control and self-discipline; therefore, we should continue avoiding all that Almighty Allah has forbidden.

MAY ALLAH ALLOW US TO MEET THE MONTH OF RAMADAN AND
GUIDE US TO PERFECT OUR DEEDS IN RAMADAN, AND TO BE
STEADFAST AFTER RAMADAN UNTIL OUR VERY LAST BREATH.