



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

HOW TO PREPARE FOR RAMADAN

Allah is so Merciful to His Servants that He has Made one whole month of Ramadan as a means to reenergise our iman, attaining Taqwa and gaining Forgiveness from Allah for our numerous shortcomings. By the end of Ramadan, we are supposed to be a different person in the eyes of Allah inshaAllah, compared to who we were before Ramadan. However, the reality is very different. Not only some people are not taking full advantage of the month of Ramadan, many would even gain weight due to the huge quantity of food consumed during iftar and sahoor. So, the weight of good deeds on the scale of the al Mizan does not increase but the weight on the scale in the bathroom increased by a few kilograms!

An important hadith that we must remember is the hadith when Jibril (AS) appeared which made our beloved prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said "Ameen" 3 times:

Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, ascended the pulpit and he said, "Amin, amin, amin." It was said, "O Messenger of Allah, you ascended the pulpit and said amin, amin, amin." 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 amin. I said amin. 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 amin. I said amin. 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 amin. I said amin."

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān 915

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

We must treat the above hadith very seriously. It is up to you and I to analyse ourselves and ask ourselves after Ramadan – did Allah Accept my Ramadan? The answers can be seen very clearly in our acts of worship and our actions:

1. Has our salah improved, especially in terms of khushoo and that we are praying on time?

2. Has our akhlaq or characters improve? Are we now telling the truth in all matters, speaking in better manners, doing less back biting, etc?
3. Are we seeking more knowledge?
4. Are we seeking more forgiveness?
5. Are we doing more adhkar?

Only we can answer the above questions – and we must be truthful to ourselves. We are getting older everyday and this means that the date of death or should we say, our “expiry date” in this life is approaching. The angel of life has a appointment with us soon – are ready to leave this world with our deeds as the only provisions to save us in the long journey in the Hereafter?

Therefore we should now learn inshaAllah on how to prepare ourselves physically, mentally and especially spiritually before we face Ramadan.

HOW TO PREPARE OURSELVES FOR RAMADAN

1. Make du’a to Allah

Of course, the very first thing we need to do is make du’a that Allah Allow us to meet Ramadan.

“Allahumma balighnaa Ramadan” – Ya Allah Allow us to meet Ramadan.

a. Guidance and Taqwa

وَالْغِنَى ، وَالْعَفَافَ ، وَالتَّقَى ، الْهُدَى أَسْأَلُكَ إِيَّيَ اللَّهُمَّ

“Allaahumma innee as-alukal hooda wat tooqo wal ‘afaaf wal gheenaa.”

“O ALLAH! I ask of You, guidance, and TAQWA (piety), and safety/wellbeing and to be free of depending upon anyone/self-sufficiency/self-contentment (except You)”
[Muslim]

b. Firm and steadfastness on the Deen

Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir recorded that Umm Salamah said that the Prophet SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam used to supplicate,

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

“Yaa, muqallibal qooloobee thabbit qalbee ‘alaa deenik”

O, You Who changes the hearts, make my heart firm on Your religion.

He (SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)) then recited,

رَبَّنَا لَا تُرِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

"*Rabbanaa laa toozigh qooloobanaa ba'daidz hadaytanaa wahablanaa milla dunka rahmatan innaka antal wahhaab.*"

Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower. [Surah Al 'Imran 3: 8]

c. The Most Superior du'a of Forgiveness

"اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ، وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ، أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ، أَبُوءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ، وَأَبُوءُ بِذَنْبِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ".

Allaahumma 'Anta Rabbee laa 'ilaaha 'illaa 'Anta, khalaqtanee wa 'anaa 'abduka, wa 'anaa 'alaa 'ahdika wa wa'dika mas-tata' tu, 'a'oothu bika min sharri maa sana' tu, 'aboo' u laka bini' matika 'alayya, wa 'aboo' u bi'thanbee faghfir lee fa'innahu laa yaghfiruth-thunooba 'illaa 'Anta.

O Allah, You are my Lord, there is none worthy of worship but You. You created me and I am your slave. I keep Your covenant, and my pledge to You so far as I am able. I seek refuge in You from the evil of what I have done. I admit to Your blessings upon me, and I admit to my misdeeds. Forgive me, for there is none who may forgive sins but You.

Reference:

Whoever recites this with conviction in the evening and dies during that night shall enter Paradise, and whoever recites it with conviction in the morning and dies during that day shall enter Paradise, Al-Bukhari 7/150. Other reports are in An-Nasa'i and At-Tirmithi.

d. Acceptance of the deeds

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

Rabbanaa taqabbal minnaa innaka antas samee-'ul 'aleem

"Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. Verily! You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower." [Surah Al Baqarah 2 : 127]

2. Seek knowledge

We have about 2 months to understand the importance of Ramadan, the Fiqh of fasting, the Qiyal al layl (Terawih), the Qur'an, the rewards of donations and helping others, how to make du'a for effective, etc.

We also need to understand the importance of this saying: "Rajab is the month to sow the seeds; Shabaan is the month to irrigate the crop; and Ramadan is the month to reap the harvest." [Abu Bakr b. al-Warraaq al-Balkhi]

3. Improve on our acts or worship

We need to analyse our prayers on how we can improve them

- Khushoo'
- Praying more on time
- Praying in congregation
- Increased praying in mosques for brothers
- Doing more sunnah prayers
- Understand the recitations that we do during prayers
- Memorise more surah
- Check if by improving our prayers, we are committing less sins (29: 45)

Improve our acts of fasting

- Control tongue, eyes, ears, etc
- Do more sunnah fasting
- Make more du'a during fasting, especially before iftar

4. Purify the hearts

- Minimise sins - especially in the sacred month

surah 9 verse 36 is Allah's Warning for the sacred months:

أَنْفُسَكُمْ فِيهِنَّ تَظْلِمُوا فَلَا

Which means "do not wrong yourselves therein..." meaning refrain yourselves from committing sins.

It means avoid sins and do not violate the laws of Allaah for you are required to respect and honour the sacred months - This prohibition includes both sinful deeds and incorrect beliefs.

- Seek forgiveness from Allah more often
- Seek His Guidance
- Do more good righteous deeds

5. Increase recitation of Qur'an

Tadabbur, more understanding of the meaning, more reflection and pondering over the verses.

إِنَّ رَبَّ يَا الرَّسُولُ وَقَالَ
الْقُرْآنَ هَذَا اتَّخَذُوا قَوْمِي
مَهْجُورًا

“And the Messenger (Muhammad, peace be upon him) will say: “O my Lord! Verily, my people deserted this Qur'an (neither listened to it, nor acted on its laws and orders).” 25: 30

Ibn Masood (*radi Allahu `anhu* – may Allah be pleased with him), a famous companion of the Prophet ﷺ (peace be upon him) said: “None of you needs to ask himself [about anything] except for the Qur'an: If he loves the Qur'an, he loves Allah, and if he detests the Qur'an, he detests Allah and His Messenger(Peace be upon him) .” (Ibn Taymiyah, al-Furqan, p. 74)

Hence, there is a direct correlation between one's relationship with Allah and his relationship with the Qur'an. This is the case because the Qur'an is our source of knowledge about the truth of all matters, what Allah (swt) likes and dislikes, and the nature of His essence and actions. It is our connection to Allah (swt) and that is why He ordered us to recite it in each of our daily prayers. Therefore, he who abandons the Qur'an has, in fact, abandoned his connection and relationship with Allah (swt).

If a Muslim continues abandoning the Qur'an in his life, the faith in his heart begins to weaken, he becomes accustomed to disregarding Allah's commands, and he begins to forget about Allah's promise in the Hereafter and, instead, desires the pleasures of this temporal life. The connection with Allah (swt), that gives true life to the hearts of humans, becomes severed and the heart becomes a dark dungeon; the filth of sins veils it and no light of guidance penetrates it. This is why `Uthmaan ibn `Affan (ra) said: “If our hearts were really clean, we would never become satiated with the words of Allah.” (Ibn Taymiyah, al-Furqan, p. 74)

We must start reciting the Qur'an even with one page a day inshaAllah

الرَّحْمَنِ ذِكْرٍ عَنِ يَعِشُ وَمَنْ
لَهُ فَهُوَ شَيْطَانًا لَهُ نُقِيضُ
قَرِينُ

السَّبِيلِ عَنِ لِيَصُدُّوهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ
مُهْتَدُونَ أَنَّهُمْ وَيَحْسَبُونَ

“And whosoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful – We appoint for him a devil and he is to him a companion. And indeed, the devils avert them from the way [of guidance], while they think that they are rightly guided.” (Qur’an, 43:36-37)

Surat Saad (38:29):

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ
لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ
أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“(This is) a Book (the Qur’an) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its verses, and that men of understanding may remember.”

6. Increase night prayers

- i. Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "The best month for observing Saum (fasting) after Ramadan is Muharram, and the best Salat after the prescribed Salat is Salat at night." **[Muslim].**
- ii. Salim bin `Abdullah bin `Umar bin Al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with them) reported, on the authority of his father, that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "What an excellent man `Abdullah is! If only he could perform optional prayers at night." Salim said that after this, (his father) `Abdullah slept very little at night. **[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].**
- iii. Jabir (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saying, "Every night there is a special time during which whatever a Muslim asks Allah of any good relating to this life or the Hereafter, it will be granted to him; and this moment comes every night." **[Muslim]**

- iv. "They used to sleep but little by night [invoking their Rubb (Allah) and praying, with fear and hope]." (51:17)

مَا اللَّيْلِ مِنْ قَلِيلًا كَانُوا
يَهْجَعُونَ

7. Increase dhikr

8. Voluntary fasting, especially in month of Sha'ban

9. HAVE A PLAN THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE MONTH OF RAMADAN

- What is your goal and achievement this Ramadan, for example, if you would like to complete reciting half or the whole Qur'an, if you want to memorise certain verses, that you may want to do the tarawih prayer from Fri to Sunday, etc
- Plan if you would like to take time off work in the last 10 nights of Ramadan;
- Plan early if you wish to do I'tikaf, as some mosques need an early reservation;
- Even the timing for sahur and iftar may need to be planned, because you do not want to eat too much during iftar that you are late for Isha and tarawih prayers in the mosque, etc.

10. CHOOSE THE CORRECT COMPANIONS (43: 67)

لِبَعْضٍ بَعْضُهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْأَخِلَاءُ
الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَّا عَدُوٌّ

Friends on that Day will be foes one to another except *Al-Muttaqun*