



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL
RAMADAN 2022 – HOW TO MAKE THIS THE BEST RAMADAN

How would we define “Best Ramadan?”

- Good and delicious food for Iftar?
- Shorter hours for fasting?
- Losing weight?
- More family gatherings?
- Sufficient preparation for Eid?

Surely – the answer must be derived from the Qur’an and authentic hadiths:

1. Being forgiven of all the sins
2. Achieving Taqwa (God consciousness)
3. More grateful to Allah for being given another opportunity to face Ramadan
4. Recharging your iman
5. Successfully being able to be in a state of worship during Laylatul Qadr
6. Entering Jannah even earlier than one who died as a martyr.

1. Sins Forgiven

Allah Helps us in the month Ramadan

- The devils are locked up
- Hellfire gate closed
- Paradise gate opens wide

From Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “When Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (3277) and Muslim (1079).

According to a version narrated by Muslim, “the devils are chained up.”

Another such report is the hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "When the first night of Ramadan comes, the devils and mischievous jinn are chained up, and the gates of Hell are closed, and none of its gates are opened. The gates of Paradise are opened and none of its gates are closed ..." Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (682) and Ibn Maajah (1642). It was classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami' (759).

In addition, we know from another hadith how important the month of Ramadan on achieving Forgiveness from Allah:

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

2. Achieve Taqwa

كُتِبَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا
عَلَى كُتِبَ كَمَا الصِّيَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ قَبْلَكُمْ مِنَ الَّذِينَ
تَتَّقُونَ

"O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqun." 2: 183

AND with taqwa comes all other goodness inshaAllah:

- Honoured by Allah

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
أَتْقَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa (i.e. one of the Muttaqoon. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. 49: 13

- Achieve Furqan

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن
تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا

“O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you Furqan a criterion ((to judge between right and wrong)” ... 8: 29

- Loved by Allah

- بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

“Yes, whoever fulfils his pledge and fears Allah much; verily, then Allah loves those who are Al-Muttaqoon.” 3: 76

- Allah Accepts ONLY from people of Taqwa

إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

“...Verily, Allah accepts only from those who are Al-Muttaqoon.” 5: 27

3. More grateful to Allah for being Granted permission to meet another Ramadan

Gratefulness comes from Allah. Allah Warned us:

وَاشْكُرُوا أَذْكُرْكُمْ فَاذْكُرُونِي
تَكْفُرُونَ وَلَا لِي

“Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying, etc.). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless Favours on you) and never be ungrateful to Me.” 2: 152

Shaytan also threatened Allah and mankind:

أَيْدِيهِمْ بَيْنَ مَنْ لَاتِيَنَّهُمْ ثُمَّ
أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَمِنْ
تَجِدُ وَلَا ۖ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَعَنْ
شَاكِرِينَ أَكْثَرَهُمْ

“Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You).” 7: 17

If we are grateful to Allah, then we will strive harder to worship Him and obey Him, and also prevent ourselves from disobeying Allah.

4. Recharging your Iman

Iman goes up and down, but in Ramadan, with the points we mention above, and with more vigorous acts of worship, such as fasting, tarawih prayers at night, reciting the Qur’an more inshaAllah – it will surely increase our iman inshaAllah.

According to Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa’ah, eemaan (faith) is “belief in the heart, words on the tongue and actions of the body.” This includes three things:

1. Belief in the heart
2. Words on the tongue
3. Actions of the body

Iman will increase and decrease. That is because the degree of belief in the heart differs from one person to another. Believing in what someone tells you is not the same as believing something that you see with your own eyes.

Believing in what one person tells you is not the same as believing what two people tell you, and so on. Hence Ibraaheem (peace be upon him) said:

أَرِنِي رَبِّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ قَالَ وَإِذْ
 قَالَ ۖ الْمَوْتَىٰ تُحْيِي كَيْفَ
 وَلَكِن بَلَىٰ قَالَ ۖ تُوْمِنَ أَوْلَمْ
 قَلْبِي لِيَطْمَئِنَّ

“ ‘My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead.’ He (Allaah) said: ‘Do you not believe?’ He [Ibraaheem (Abraham)] said: ‘Yes (I believe), but to be stronger in Faith’” [al-Baqarah 2:260]

Eemaan may increase with regard to belief, contentment and tranquillity in the heart. A person may experience that in himself when he attends gatherings of dhikr where he hears a lesson. Remembering Paradise and Hell increases eemaan to the point where it as if you can see them with your own eyes. But when a person is negligent and leaves those gatherings, this certain faith is reduced in his heart.

5. Able to be in a state of worship during Laylatul Qadr

The companion Anas ibn Malik reported: “Ramadan approached, so the Messenger of God said: ‘This month has come to you, and in it there is a night that is better than a thousand months. Whoever is deprived of it is deprived of all goodness, and no one is deprived of its goodness except one who is truly deprived.’” (Ibn Majah 1644)

6. Enter Paradise earlier than one who died as a martyr

Talha ibn ‘Ubaydallah (radhiallahu anhu) reported that two men came to the Prophet (sallallahualayhi wa sallam) who had accepted Islam at the same time. One of them used to partake in Jihad more-so than the other, and so (one day) he fought in a battle and was martyred therein. The other remained behind him for another year, and then he passed away.

Talha said, ‘I saw in my dream that I was at the door of Paradise when behold, I was with both of them (the two men). Someone came out of Paradise and allowed the man who passed away later to enter first. Then he came out again and allowed the martyred one to enter. Then he returned and said to me, ‘Go back, for your time has not come yet.’

Talha woke up and began to inform others about this and they were all surprised. This reached the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and when they informed him of it, he said: He (sallallahualayhi wa sallam) said, 'What are you surprised about?' They said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Out of them both, this one strove harder (in Jihad) then he was martyred but this other one was entered into Paradise before him.' The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said,

'Did he not remain behind him for one year?' They said, 'Yes (he did).' He said, 'Did he not reach Ramadan, fast and pray with such and such number of prostrations in the year?' They said, 'Yes.' The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, 'So the difference between them is greater than what is between the heavens and the earth.'

- Sahih narration from Ibn Majah (2/345, 346) and al-Albani's 'al-Silsilah al-Sahihah'

So, taking account all of the above,

How to get the maximum benefit in the Blessed month of Ramadan?

1. MAKE PLENTY OF DU'A

Make du'a that Allah Grant us

- Good health
- Strength
- Taqwa
- Forgiveness of sins
- Steadfastness
- Jannatul Firdaus

Examples of du'a

a. Guidance and Taqwa

وَالْغِنَى ، وَالْعَفَافَ ، وَالتَّقَى ، الْهُدَى أَسْأَلُكَ إِنِّي 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 qoolooabee 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. 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.

3. ENSURE WE HAVE SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE OF RAMADAN AND THE VARIOUS DEEDS

I. FASTING

"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for the people before you in order for you to gain God consciousness" [Surah Al Baqarah 2: 183]

From the **sunnah** we have the following statements of the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam):

"Islam is built upon [the following] five pillars: testifying that there is no God except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, the establishment of the prayer, the giving of zakah, the fast of Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Makkah." [Related by Al Bukhari]

Talhah ibn 'Ubaidullah reported that a man came to the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of Allah, tell me what Allah requires of me as regards fasting." He answered, "The month of Ramadan." The man asked: "Is there any other [fast]?" The Prophet answered: "No, unless you do so voluntarily." [Related by Al Bukhari]

VIRTUES OF FASTING

- (a) Abu Hurairah reported the Messenger of Allah (SAW), saying: "*Allah said: 'Every action of the son of Adam is for him except fasting, for that is **solely for Me. I give the reward for it.**' The fast is a shield. If one is fasting, he should not use foul language, raise his voice, or behave foolishly. If someone reviles him or fights with him he should say, 'I am fasting,' twice. By the One in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the [bad] breath of the one who is fasting is better in the sight of Allah on the Day of Resurrection than the smell of musk. The one who is fasting is happy at two times: when he breaks his fast he is happy with it, and when he meets his Lord he will be happy that he has fasted.*" [Ahmad, Muslim, and An-Nasa'i]

A similar version was recorded by al-Bukhari and Abu Dawud, but with the following addition: "*He leaves his food, drink, and desires for My sake. **His fasting is for Me... I will give the reward for it, and for every good deed, he will receive ten similar to it.***"

- (b) The fact that he is abstaining from food and drink both in public and in secret shows his honest faith and strong love of Allah, and his knowledge and feeling that Allah is all-knowing of everything. For this reason Allah has made the reward for fasting greater than for any other type of worship. Allah said in the **hadith Qudsi**: "*Every deed of the son of Adam will be multiplied [in rewards], the good deed by ten of its like, up to seven hundreds, up to whatever Allah wills, except fasting, it is for Me and I will reward it. He abandons his desire and his food for My sake..*" (Related by Muslim)

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "*...And people may see that a person is not eating in front of them, but the fact that he is really abandoning his food and his desire for the sake of God is a thing that nobody can find out about, and that is the essence of fasting.*" (**Zaad al-Ma'ad 2/29**)

- (c) 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW), said: "*The fast and the Qur'an are two **intercessors** for the servant of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The fast will say: 'O Lord, I prevented him from his food and desires during the day. Let me intercede for him.'* The Qur'an will say: '*I prevented him from sleeping at night. Let me intercede for him.'* And their intercession will be accepted." [Ahmad related this hadith with a sahih chain]
- (d) Abu Umamah reported: "I came to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and said: '*Order me to do **a deed that will allow me to enter Paradise.***' He said: '***Stick to fasting, as there is no equivalent to it.***' Then I came to him again and he said: '***Stick to fasting.***'" [Related by Ahmad, an-Nasa'i, and al-Hakim who classified it as sahih].
- (e) Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: "*No servant fasts on a day in the path of Allah except that **Allah removes the hellfire***"

seventy years further away from his face."

[Related by "the group," except for Abu Dawud]

- (f) Sahl ibn Sa'd reported that the Prophet said: "*There is a gate to Paradise that is called ar-Rayyan. On the Day of Resurrection it will say: 'Where are those who fasted?' When the last [one] has passed through the gate, it will be locked.*"

[Related by al Bukhari and Muslim]

II. RAMADAN AND AL-QURAN

The month of Ramadân in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong).

[Surah Al Baqarah 2: 185]

This verse clearly indicates the link between the Holy month of Ramadan and the Holy Quran, as stated in the earlier statement.

Ibn 'Abbas narrates "that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was the most generous person, and he would be at his most generous in Ramadan because Jibril would come to him every night and he would rehearse the Qur'an with him." [Reported by al-Bukhari]

This hadith contains recommendation of the following:

- Studying the Qur'an in Ramadan;
- coming together for this purpose;
- checking (one's memory/knowledge of) the Qur'an with someone who has preserved it better;
- increasing recitation of the Qur'an in Ramadan;
- that the night time is the best time to recite, when other preoccupations decrease and it is easier to concentrate, as in Surah al-Muzzammil 73:6.

Further, Fatimah (r.a.) narrated from her father (SAW), who told her that Jibril (a.s.) would rehearse the Quran with him (in Ramadan) once every year, and he did so twice in the year of his death. [Related by al Bukhari]

Studying the Quran should bring people together, but if it failed, the our beloved Prophet (SAW) advised us: "*Recite the Quran as long as your hearts agree on it; if you disagree about it, stop reciting it (for the time being)*" [Related by Al Bukhari]

III. RAMADAN AND LAITATUL QADR

Lailatul Qadr, or the Night of Power, is so important that one whole chapter of the Holy Quran is devoted specially for this very special occasion:

"Verily, We have sent it (this Qur'an) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree).

And what will make you know what the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is?

The Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e., worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e., 83 years and 4 months).

Therein descend the angels and the Ruh [Jibril (Gabriel)] by Allah's Permission with all Decrees.

(All that night), there is peace (and goodness from Allah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn."

[Surah Al Qadr 97: 1-5]

On this night, the single most important event in human history unfolded as, after the Glorious Qurân was preserved in the Protected Tablet, Jibril (a.s.) descended with the blessed book to reveal it, upon Allâh's command, to His Messenger (SAW).

Allah SWT also reminded us in another verse of the Holy Quran:

"We sent it (this Qur'an) down on a blessed night [(i.e., the Night of Al-Qadr, Surah No:97) in the month of Ramadan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar]. Verily, We are ever warning [mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of Lordship and in Our Oneness of worship].

Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments (i.e., the matters of deaths, births, provisions, and calamities for the whole (coming) year as decreed by Allah).

As a Command (or this Qur'an or the Decree of every matter) from Us. Verily, We are ever sending (the Messengers).

(As) a Mercy from your Rubb, Verily! He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."

[Surah Ad Dukhaan 44: 3-6]

These verses of the Quran significantly elevate the status of this special part of Ramadan.

(a) When is Lailatul Qadr

Aishah (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) used to seclude himself (in the mosque) during the last ten nights of Ramadan. He would say, "*Search for Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree) in the last ten nights of Ramadan.*" [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

In another hadeeth:

ʿAishah (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) used to observe I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan and say, "*Seek Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree) in the odd nights out of the last ten nights of Ramadan.*" [Related by Al-Bukhari]

We learn from this Hadith that Lailat-ul-Qadr occurs in any of the five odd nights - 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th - of the last ten nights of Ramadan. Its exact date has not been revealed for the reason that people keep themselves awake for prayer for a larger number of nights. Had its date been fixed, people would have kept awake for prayer only on that night. There is a general belief among the scholars that it is fixed, on the 27th night of Ramadan. But this is not correct. Ahadith do not confirm this view.

In another hadeeth:

ʿAishah (r.a.) reported: When the last ten nights (of Ramadan) would begin, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) would keep awake at night (for prayer and devotion), awaken his family and prepare himself to be more diligent in worship. [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Lastly,

ʿAishah (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) used to strive more in worship during Ramadan than he strove in any other time of the year; and he would devote himself more (in the worship of Allah) in the last ten nights of Ramadan than he strove in earlier part of the month. [Related by Muslim]

(b) The reward for those who worship during Lailatul Qadr

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) reported: The Prophet (SAW) said, "*Whosoever performs Qiyam during Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree), with Faith and being hopeful of Allah's reward, will have his former sins forgiven.*" [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

“Qiyam” here means what keeps one awake to one's capacity and for worship and makes one perform Nawafil, impels one to beg forgiveness from Allah SWT, urges one to praise Him (SWT). Specially, if a person performs ʿIsha prayer and Fajr prayer

in congregation, he will hopefully attain all those distinctions which are mentioned in this Hadith.

(c) Dua during lailatul Qadr

`Aishah (r.a.) reported: I asked: "O Messenger of Allah! If I realize Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree), what should I supplicate in it?" He (SAW) replied, "You should supplicate:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُورٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

Allahumma innaka `afuwun, tuhibbul-`afwa, fa`fu `anni

O Allah, You are Most Forgiving, and You love forgiveness; so forgive me."
[Related by Ahmad, Ibn Majah & At-Tirmidhi]

(d) Signs of Lailatul Qadar

The Prophet (SAW) described the night as serene, tranquil, and peaceful. The sun at sunrise would appear reddish and without its normal blazing and sharp rays. Ubayy (r.a.) said : "*On the morning of the night of Qadr the sun would rise without any beams; (it is like) a wash basin until it raises.*" [Related by Muslim]

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) said : "*We mentioned the night of Qadr to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and he said: "Which of you remembers when the moon rises and it is like half a bowl."* [Related by Muslim]

Ibn Abbaas (r.a.) said that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said : "*The night of Qadr is a night of generosity and happiness, it is not hot and neither is it cold. The sun comes up in its morning weak, reddish.*" [Related by Tabarane, Ibn Khuzaimah and Bazaar]

The Prophet (SAW) added that "*the angel of earth on that night of Qadr will be more numerous than all the pebbles of the earth.*"

IV. RAMADAN AND QIYAM AL-LAYL

(a) Introduction

Qiyam means '*standing*' and 'Qiyam al-Layl' means '*standing at night*'. In the Shari'ah term both terms refer to '*the voluntary night prayer, whose time extends after the Isha praye until dawn.*'

This voluntary prayer is described as Qiyam al-Layl because it involves long standings, in which long portions of the Qur'an are recited. Other common names for this prayer are '**Salat al-Layl**' (the night prayer), **Tahajjud** (from

hajjada meaning awake at night), **witr** and **Tarawih** (resting). [Lisan ul-Arab under 'Hajada' and 'Rawaha']

It should be noted that Tahajjud is not different from Qiyam and Tarawih, these are different names of the same prayer. Commonly the word Taraweeh is used to describe this prayer in Ramadaan, the Muslims used this term from early times. Muhammad Shaqrah says: *“The reason for this name is that due to long recitation the people used to rest after every four rak'ah. Eventually this practice became a necessary element of Taraweeh even with short recitations. This led people to think that ‘Tarawih’ is the correct name revealed to Allah's Messenger (SAW).”*
[Irsad us- Sari p.75-77]

This Nafil Salat has been interpreted in Ahadith as Qiyam Ramadan. Later on they were named Tarawih. Tarawih is the plural of Tarwihah. Since the Companions of the Prophet (SAW) and the successors to the Companions used to make a lengthy Qiyam in them and they would take rest after performing every four Rak`ah. This is how these came to be named Tarawih (Rest prayer). (Four Rak`ah are called Tarwihah).

(b) Excellence of Qiyam in Ramadan

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

- i. Abu Hurairah (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "He who observes optional prayer (Tarawih prayers) throughout Ramadan, out of sincerity of Faith and in the hope of earning reward will have his past sins pardoned." [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]
- ii. Abu Hurairah (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) used to urge (the people) to perform (optional Tarawih) prayer at night during the month of Ramadan. He did not order them or make it obligatory on them. He (SAW) said, "Whosoever performs (optional Tarawih) prayers at night during the month of Ramadan, with Faith and in the hope of receiving Allah's reward, will have his past sins forgiven."
[Muslim]

AMONG THE MOST RIGHTEOUS

Amr bin Murrah al-Juhani (radhi allahu anhu) said: *“A man from the tribe of Quraysh asked the Messenger of Allah (SAW): “O Messenger of Allah (SAW) What if I testified that there is no (true) god except Allah and that you are Allah's Messenger, prayed the five prayers, fasted the month, stood for Qiyam in Ramadan and paid Zakah?” The Prophet (SAW)*

replied: "Anyone dying like this will be among the siddiqun (the highly virtuous) and the shuhadah (martyrs)." [(sahih) Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Hibban]

V. RAMADAN AND ZAKAAH AL FITR

Zakaah al-Fitr is often referred to as Sadaqah al-Fitr. The word Fitr means the same as Iftaar, breaking a fast and it comes from the same root word as Futoor which means breakfast. Thus, Islamically, Zakaah al-Fitr is the name given to charity which is distributed at the end of the fast of Ramadan,

Sadaqah al-Fitr is a duty which is **Wajib** on every Muslim, whether male or female, minor or adult as long as he/she has the means to do so.

The proof that this form of charity is compulsory can be found in the Sunnah whereby Ibn `Umar reported that the Prophet (SAW) made Zakaah al-Fitr **compulsory** on every slave, freeman, male, female, young and old among the Muslims; one Saa` of dried dates or one Saa` of barely. [Bukhaaree]

The head of the household may pay the required amount for the other members. Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree said, "On behalf of our young and old, free men and slaves, we used to take out during Allaah's Messenger's (SAW) lifetime one Saa` of grain, cheese or raisins". [Muslim]

SIGNIFICANCE

- I. The significant role played by Zakaah in the **circulation of wealth** within the Islamic society is also played by the Sadaqah al-Fitr. However, in the case of Sadaqah al-Fitr, each individual is required to calculate how much charity is due from himself and his dependents and go into the community in order to find those who deserve such charity. Thus, Sadaqah al-Fitr plays a very important role in the **development of the bonds of community**. The rich are obliged to come in direct contact with the poor, and the poor are put in contact with the extremely poor. This contact between the various levels of society helps to build real bonds of brotherhood and love within the Islamic community and trains those who have, to be generous to those who do not have.
- II. The main purpose of Zakaah al-Fitr is to provide those who fasted with the means of **making up for their errors during the month of fasting**. Zakaah al-Fitr also provides the poor with a means with which they can celebrate the festival of breaking the fast (`Eed al-Fitr) along with the rest of the Muslims.

Ibn Abbaas reported, "The Prophet (SAW) made Zakaah al-Fitr compulsory so that those who fasted may be purified of their idle deeds and shameful talk (committed during Ramadaan) and so that the poor may be fed. Whoever gives it

before Salaah will have it accepted as Zakaah, while he who gives it **after the Salaah has given Sadaqah.** [Abu Dawood - rated Saheeh by Shaikh Naser Al-Albaneer]

Hence, the goal of Sadaqah al-Fitr is the spiritual development of the Believers. By making them give up some of their wealth, the believers are taught the higher moral characteristics of generosity, compassion (sympathy for the unfortunate), gratitude to God and the righteousness. But, since Islaam does not neglect man's material need, part of the goal of Zakaah al-Fitr is the economic well-being of the poorer members of society.

VI. RAMADAN AND I'TIKAF

I'tikaf during the last ten nights and *i'tikaf* being done in all mosques going by the words of Allah SWT:

وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

"But do not have sexual intercourse with them while you are in retreat in the mosques. These are Allah's limits, so do not go near them. Thus does Allah make His Signs clear to people so that perhaps they will be godfearing."

(2:187)

A. Ibn `Umar (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to observe I`tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan.

[Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

B. `Aishah (r.a.) reported: The Prophet (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to engage himself in I`tikaf (seclusion for prayers) in the mosque during the last ten nights of Ramadan till he passed away; thereafter, his wives followed this practice after him.

[Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

C. Abu Hurairah (r.a.) reported: The Prophet (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to observe I`tikaf every year (during Ramadan) for ten days; in the year in which he passed away, he observed I`tikaf for twenty days. [Related by Al-Bukhari]

It is preferred for the one who is making I`tikaf to perform many supererogatory acts of worship and to occupy himself with prayers, reciting the Qur'an, glorifying and praising Allah, extolling His oneness and His greatness, asking His forgiveness, sending salutations on the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and supplicating Allah - that is, all actions that bring one closer to Allah. Included among these actions is g

Women doing I`tikaf

'Aisha (the wife of the Prophet) reported that the Prophet (SAW), used to practice I`tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan till he died and then his wives used to practice I`tikaf after him.[Bukhari]

It is permitted for women to do i`tikaf (spiritual retreat) in a specific place in their house, whenever they have the time and are able to do so without neglecting their family duties and other responsibilities.

The same considerations would apply as in any other i`tikaf: ones primary concern during the time should be towards worship, and unnecessary worldly activity should be avoided.

Even when one is in their monthly period, it is recommended in the Hanafi school to sit in a designated place of prayer (musalla) at home, after having made wudu, and make dhikr for the time it takes to pray.

4. ENSURE THAT THE DEEDS THAT ACCEPTED

- Correct your intention
- Follow the Qur'an and sunnah
- Recite the du'a above

5. REMEMBER THE COMMON MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE DURING RAMADAN, WHICH WE DISCUSSED LAST WEEK

- Taking it as a ritual
- Fasting but not controlling tongue
- Spending too much time preparing for iftar (especially for sisters)
- Too much food and eating
- Do not work hard in the LAST TEN NIGHTS of Ramadan
- Rushing to recite the Qur'an without understanding the meaning or without pondering over the verses
- Wasting time
- Bad companions

6. RECITE QUR'AN WITH PROPER UNDERSTANDING AND TADABBUR

Tadabbur, means pondering over the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an and contemplating them. Literally, it means to look into the consequence or the end result of the matters, e. g. if we did that what would happen to us.

It is not enough to learn the Qur'an and recite it profusely. But what is required from us is to understand the words and the meaning of the verses. To know the matter (or the case or what the verse says) and this cannot be attained except by reading the Tafseer (the interpretation), by heart or heedful mind and not by ears and eyes.

It is also said that Tadabbur is comprehensive and deep thinking and consideration in order to reach to a guidance or indications.

The scholars also said: The Tadabbur cannot be attained (or fulfilled) except by:

- (1) Good and correct recitation of the Qur'an.
- (2) Correct understanding of the meaning of the words and verses (using a translation if necessary) and by using the Tafseer.
- (3) Then last by acting upon it.

Undoubtedly, if you understand the meaning and the Tafseer, you will then reflect upon what you read because you will know what Allah wants from you.

Bear in mind that Tadabbur, pondering over the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an, is obligatory upon every Muslim reciting the Qur'an.

The Qur'an itself emphasises that mere reading or reciting of it is insufficient. One needs to reflect upon what one reads, and then act upon it. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aala) said in Surat Saad (38:29):

"(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."

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aala) also said in Surat Muhammad (47:24):

"Do they not think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding)?"

If man turns away from the Qur'an, his heart will be hardened and become sick at the end he will not reach the guidance nor he will get a light in his heart and this is because he did not ponder over the meaning of the Qur'an.

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aala) said in Surat an-Nisa' (4:82):

"Do they not then consider the Qur'an carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much contradictions."

And in Surat al-Mu'minun (23:68), Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aala) said:

"Have they not pondered over the Word (of Allah i.e. what is sent down to the Prophet(Salla-Allaahu alaihi wa sallam))."

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7. LEAVE OUT THE COMPANIONS WHICH DO NOT BENEFIT YOU IN THE HEREAFTER

And keep yourself (O Muhammad) patiently with those who call on their Lord (i.e. your companions who remember their Lord with glorification, praising in prayers, etc., and other righteous deeds, etc.) morning and afternoon, seeking His Face, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and whose affair (deeds) has been lost. 18: 28

118. O you who believe! Take not as (your) *Bitanah* (advisors, consultants, protectors, helpers, friends, etc.) those outside your religion (pagans, Jews, Christians, and hypocrites) since they will not fail to do their best to corrupt you. They desire to harm you severely. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, but what their breasts conceal is far worse. Indeed We have made plain to you the *Ayat* (proofs, evidences, verses) if you understand.

119. Lo! You are the ones who love them but they love you not, and you believe in all the Scriptures [i.e. you believe in the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel), while they disbelieve in your Book, the Qur'an]. And when they meet you, they say, "We believe". But when they are alone, they bite the tip of their fingers at you in rage. Say: "Perish in your rage. Certainly, Allah knows what is in the breasts (all the secrets)." 3: 118-119

Friends on that Day will be foes one to another except *Al-Muttaqun* (pious - see V.2:2). 43: 67

It was narrated that the Prophet (saw) said, "The example of a good companion in comparison with a bad one is like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith's bellows (or furnace); from the first you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the bellows would either burn your clothes, or you get a bad nasty smell thereof." [Bukhari]

Islam recognizes that friends have a strong influence on people and that their presence will affect the strength of their relationship with Allah (swt).

The Prophet (saw) said, "A person follows the Deen (way of life) of his close

friend; therefore let each of you look carefully at whom he chooses for friends.” [Tirmidhi]

MAY ALLAH INCREASE OUR HEALTH AND IMAN SO THAT WE WILL FACE RAMADAN WITH A CLEAN HEART SO THAT WE CAN REAP THE FULL BENEFIT OF THE BLESSED MONTH.