

*Preparing for Ramadhaan:
Body, Mind and Soul*



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Introduction

Allaah The Almighty Says (what means):

- *{The month of Ramadhaan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadhaan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Sawm (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Sawm (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allaah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allaah [i.e. to say Takbeer (Allaahu Akbar: Allaah is the Most Great)] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.}* [Quran 2:185]
- *{O you who believe! Observing Sawm (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-Muttaqoon (the pious).}* [Quran 2:183]

As the month of *Ramadhaan* approaches this year, there are several things Muslims can do to prepare themselves spiritually and physically for the month-long period of fasting, which is obligatory

upon all able-bodied Muslims who have reached the age of maturity.

Ramadhaan is a great opportunity for performing acts of goodness, worship and obedience. It is a month in which the rewards for good deeds are multiplied and in which committing bad deeds is a graver sin than at other times. The gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell are shut, and the sinners' repentance to *Allaah* The Almighty is accepted. It is a month whose beginning is mercy, its middle portion is forgiveness and its end is redemption from the Fire.

Thus, it is incumbent upon sincere believers to thank Him for the season of goodness and blessings that He has bestowed upon Muslims. The best means of showing gratitude for the blessing of witnessing this month is to make the most of this time by filling it with acts of worship and forsaking *Haraam* (unlawful) actions.

For the sincere believer, every month is an occasion for worship and his whole life is spent in obeying *Allaah* The Almighty. However, in the month of *Ramadhaan* there is even greater motivation to do good, focus on worship and turn even more to *Allaah* The Almighty. By His grace, our generous Lord bestows His bounty upon the fasting believers, multiplies the reward for them and generously rewards righteous deeds. Thus, we should hasten to do good deeds in this month and strive to utilize its days with deeds that please *Allaah* The Almighty and which will help us on the Day when we meet Him.

The Prophet ﷺ used to give glad tidings to his Companions of the coming of *Ramadhaan*, as narrated from *Imaam Ahmad* and *An-Nasaa'i* رحمهما. According to the *Hadeeth* of *Abu Hurayrah* رضي الله عنه, “*Allaah’s Messenger* ﷺ said to his Companions: ***"The month of Ramadhaan is coming, the blessed month wherein Allaah has made fasting binding on you. In it, the gates of Paradise are opened, and in it, the gates of Hell are locked, and the devils are enchained. In it is the beneficent night of a thousand months (i.e. Laylat ul-Qadar). Whoever denies goodness in it has indeed been deprived."***

Ma’la ibn al-Fadhl رضي الله عنه said about the *Salaf* (the righteous predecessors), “*They used to call upon Allaah for six months until Ramadhaan reached them, then they would call on Him the other six months that Allaah may accept it from them.*” *Yahya ibn Abi Katheer* said, “*Their supplication used to be:*

‘O Allaah, keep me safe until Ramadhaan, and make Ramadhaan faultless for me, and secure it for me as an accepted (month of virtue).’”

The early generations of the *Ummah* used to make *Du’aa* six months after *Ramadhaan* that *Allaah* accept their deeds in *Ramadhaan*, and for the next six months, they would make *Du’aa* to *Allaah* The Almighty to grant them the blessing of being alive in the coming *Ramadhaan*.

Special virtues of Ramadhāan



Ibn al-Qayyim رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said regarding the virtues of the month of Ramadhāan, "Another example of that – i.e., of the differentiation between the things that Allaah has created – is the fact that the month of Ramadhāan is superior to all other months, and the last ten nights are superior to the other nights." (Zaad al-Ma'aad, 1/56)

This month is superior to others in four aspects:

1 – In it there is the best night of the year, which is *Laylat al-Qadar*. Allaah The Almighty Says (what means):

{Verily, We have sent it (this Quran) down in the Night of Al-Qadar (Decree). And what will make you know what the Night of Al-Qadar (Decree) is? The Night of Al-Qadar (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allaah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e. 83

years and 4 months). Therein descend the angels and the Rooh [Jibreel (Gabriel)] by Allaah's Permission with all Decrees, (All that night), there is peace (and goodness from Allaah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn} [Quran 97:1-5]

Thus, worship on this night is better than worshipping for a thousand months.

2 – In this month, the best of Books was revealed to the best of the Prophets. *Allaah* The Almighty Says (what means):




- *{The month of Ramadhaan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)}* [Quran 2:185]
- *{We sent it (this Quran) down on a blessed night [(i.e. the Night of Al-Qadar) in the month of Ramadhaan — 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. As a Command (or this Quran or the Decree of every matter) from Us. Verily, We are ever sending (the Messengers)}* [Quran 44:3-5]


It was narrated by *Ahmad* and *at-Tabaraani* رحمهما الله in *al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer* that *Waathilah ibn al-Asqa'* رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of *Allaah* ﷺ said: ***“The Scriptures of Ibraaheem were sent down on***

the first of the month of Ramadhaan. The Tawraat was sent down on the sixth of Ramadhaan. The Injeel was sent down on the thirteenth of Ramadhaan. The Zaboor was sent down on the eighteenth of Ramadhaan, and the Quran was sent down on the twenty-fourth of Ramadhaan." (Classed as *Hasan* by *al-Albaani* in *al-Silsilah al-Saheehah*, 1575)

3 – In this month, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are chained up.

It was narrated from *Abu Hurayrah*  that the Messenger of Allaah  said: ***“When Ramadhaan comes, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains.”*** (*Al-Bukhaari & Muslim*).

An-Nasaa’i  narrated from *Abu Hurayrah*  that the Messenger of Allaah  said: ***“When Ramadhaan comes, the gates of mercy are opened and the gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are put in chains.”*** (Classed as *Saheeh* by *al-Albaani* in *Saheeh al-Jaami’*, 471.)

At-Tirmithi, Ibn Maajah and Ibn Khuzaymah  narrated in one report, *“When the first night of the month of Ramadhaan comes, the devils and rebellious jinn are chained up and the gates of Hell are closed, and not one gate of it is opened. The gates of Paradise are opened and not one gate of it is closed. And a caller cries out: ‘O seeker of good, proceed; O seeker of evil, desist! And Allaah*

has those whom He redeems from the Fire, and that happens every night.” [Classed as *Hasan* by *al-Albaani* in *Saheeh al-Jaami'*, 759]

A person may ask: how is it that we see many evil actions and sins committed in *Ramadhaan* if the devils are chained up?

There can be various answers to this question:

- the evil actions decrease for those who observe the conditions and etiquette of fasting
- the ones who are chained up are merely some of the devils – namely the rebellious ones – not all of them
- what is meant is that evil is reduced in *Ramadhaan*, which is a proven fact

Even if some evil actions are perpetrated during this month, the frequency of their occurrence is still much lesser than at other times. Besides, saying the devils are chained up does not necessarily mean that no evil or sin will happen, because there are other causes of evil actions besides the devils, such as the whispers of evil souls, bad habits and the instigation of devils among mankind. [*Al-Fath*, 4/145]

4 – There are numerous acts of worship which are specific to *Ramadhaan*, some of which are not performed at other times, such as fasting for the entire month, praying *Taraweeh* (voluntary congregational prayer), feeding the poor, *I'tikaaf* (staying in seclusion in the mosque), *Sadaqah* (charity), and completing reading the Quran.

Some of the many important lessons we learn from preparing for and witnessing the month of *Ramadhaan* are:

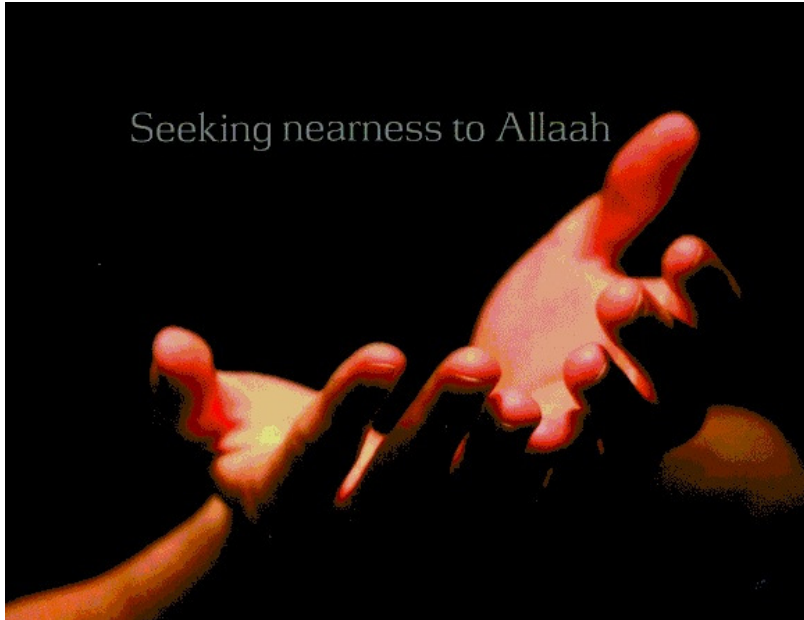
- ***Developing Taqwa***

Fasting has been legislated in order that we may gain *Taqwa*, as *Allaah*, the Most High, Says (what means): ***{O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed upon those before you in order that you may attain Taqwa.}*** [Quran 2:183]

The Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Fasting is a shield with which the servant protects himself from the Fire."*** (*Hasan: Ahmad*, authenticated by *al-Albaani* in *Saheeh ut-Targheeb*)

Thus, we should ask ourselves, in preparation of the month of fasting: Will this fasting make us more fearful and obedient to *Allaah*? Will it aid us in distancing ourselves from sins and disobedience?

- *Seeking Nearness to Allaah*



According to a Hadeeth:

"Whosoever reaches the month of Ramadhān and does not have his sins forgiven, and so enters the fire, then may Allaah distance him." (Ahmad and al-Bayhaqi)

- *Acquiring Patience*

Ramadhān is called the month of patience because it restrains the soul from eating drinking, conjugal relations and sexual desires. (At-Tamheed of Al Haafidh ibn Abdul Barr)

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

"O young men! Whoever amongst you is able to marry, then let him do so; for it restrains the eyes and protects the private parts."

But whoever is unable, then let him fast, because it will be a shield for him." (At-Tamheed of Al Haafidh ibn Abdul Barr)

Thus, fasting is a means of learning self-restraint and patience. With patience, we are able to strengthen our resolve to worship *Allaah* alone, with sincerity, and cope with life's ups and downs. Thus, with patience we are able to perform our prayers calmly and correctly and without being hasty.

With patience, we are able to restrain our souls from greed and stinginess and thus give part of our surplus wealth in *Zakaah* (obligatory charity). With patience, we are able to subdue the soul and thus endure the ordeal and hardships of *Hajj*, without losing tempers and behaving badly. Likewise, with patience we are able to stand firm and fight *Jihad* against the disbelievers, hypocrites and heretics – withstanding their constant onslaught, without wavering and buckling, without despairing or being complacent, and without becoming hasty and impatient at the first signs of hardship.

Allaah, the Most High, Says (what means):

{O Prophet, urge the Believers to fight ... So if there are one hundred who are patient, they shall overcome two hundred; and if there be one thousand, they shall overcome two thousand, by the permission of Allaah. And Allaah is with the patient ones.}
[Quran 8:65-66].

Thus, in this month, we should strive to develop a firm resolve for doing acts of obedience, and to adorn ourselves with patience – having certainty in the words of our Messenger ﷺ: ***"And know that victory comes with patience, relief with affliction, and ease with hardship."*** (Saheeh: Ahmad, at-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer*, authenticated by *al-Hilaali* in *as-Sabrun Jameel*)

- ***Cultivating Good Manners***



Fasting is not merely abstaining from eating and drinking. Rather, it is also abstaining from ignorant and indecent speech. So if anyone abuses or behaves ignorantly with you, then say: ***"I am fasting, I am fasting."*** (Saheeh: *Ibn Khuzaymah* and *al-Haakim*, who authenticated it.

- *Experiencing Muslim Unity*

As Muslims from all around the world commence *Ramadhaan*, we realize that we are part of a community; our hearts and actions united in pursuing *Allaah's* pleasure. There are many narrations mentioning the blessings of breaking the fast together and there is also great reward in feeding a fasting person.

Thus, during the month of *Sha'baan* we should find out more about the traditions of Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ related to *Ramadhaan* and make a sincere effort to implement them this year. We should also try to purify our hearts and intentions before the commencement of *Ramadhaan* to make this fast successful for our families and ourselves.

Some of us deceive ourselves into thinking that when *Ramadhaan* comes we will suddenly change and worship *Allaah* night and day but we are only deceiving ourselves in thinking like this.

The Prophet ﷺ said: ***“Whoever draws near to Allaah during it (Ramadhaan) with a single characteristic from the characteristics of (voluntary) goodness, he is like whoever performs an obligatory act in other times. And whoever performs an obligatory act during it, he is like whoever performed seventy obligatory acts in other times.”*** (Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 1887)

The best way we can make the best of this *Ramadhaan* and avail of the immense rewards that can be earned in it is to prepare for it right now, while we have time.

- ***Taking stock before Ramadhaan***

One of the best ways to prepare for *Ramadhaan* is by taking stock of ourselves and recognizing our shortcomings in living up to the *Shahaadatayn* (two testimonies of faith), in fulfilling our duties and in not keeping away from the desires and doubts that we may have fallen into. We should rectify ourselves well in advance so that in *Ramadhaan* we will have a higher degree of faith, since faith is liable to increase and decrease. It increases through obedience to *Allaah* The Almighty and it decreases through disobedience and sin. The first act of obedience that a person should achieve is that of being a true slave of *Allaah* The Almighty and believing that there is none that is rightfully worshipped except Him. In doing so, he directs all kinds of worship to *Allaah* alone and does not associate anyone else in worship with Him.

We should evaluate ourselves and recognize our shortcomings in performing acts of worship such as praying in congregation, remembering *Allaah* (*Thikr*) and paying attention to the rights of neighbors, relatives and the Muslims. We should also check whether we are engaged in small acts of goodness that weigh

heavily on our scale, such as spreading the greeting of *Salaam*, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, urging one another to follow the truth. We should practice being patient and steadfast in avoiding evil actions and in doing good deeds, and accepting the decree of *Allaah* The Almighty with patience.

Thus, we should take stock of ourselves and see the extent to which we follow our whims and desires. We should stop ourselves from persisting in sins, great or small. We should never forget that *Allaah* The Almighty stretches forth His hand during the day to accept the repentance of those who sinned at night, and He stretches forth His hand at night to accept the repentance of those who sinned during the day. This is even more so in *Ramadh*aan.

Allaah The Almighty Says (what means):

- *{And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for Al-Muttaqoon (the pious). Those who spend (in Allaah's Cause) in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men; verily, Allaah loves Al-Muhsinoon (the good-doers). And those who, when they have committed Faahishah (illegal sexual intercourse) or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allaah and ask forgiveness for their sins; — and none can forgive sins but Allaah — and do not persist in what (wrong) they have done, while they know. For such, the*

reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath (Paradise), wherein they shall abide forever. How excellent is this reward for the doers (who do righteous deeds according to Allaah's Orders) }
[Quran 3:133-136]

- *{Say: "O 'Ibaadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allaah, verily, Allaah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful} [Quran 39:53]*
- *{And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allaah's forgiveness, he will find Allaah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful} [Quran 4:110]*

Taking stock, repenting and seeking forgiveness is the best way of welcoming *Ramadhaan*, as this is the month of great gains and profits. The astute believer is the one who utilizes the opportunities of this month to the optimum by maximizing his acts of worship, praying a great deal, reading the Quran, forgiving people, being kind to others and giving charity to the poor.

Special focus on Muslim women

Giving some thought to the unique concerns that Muslim women face during this month can help us prepare for them and make the month a more successful one. This is especially true for new converts to Islam, because *Ramadhaan* is a completely new

experience for them and they require the support and company of other Muslim sisters in the community. Similarly, Muslim wives and mothers shoulder extra responsibilities within the household, such as cooking meals on time for their families and any guests in addition to continuing to taking care of the home, children and other obligations as usual. It is crucial, then, that women take the time to plan before the month even starts.

One of the most important things women can do to prepare for *Ramadhaan* is to take time to learn about the rulings that are relevant to them in *Ramadhaan*, such as the times that they are prohibited from fasting, when they are menstruating or bleeding after childbirth.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women have special permission not to fast during *Ramadhaan* if they feel that they or their babies will be harmed by it, but they are not prohibited from fasting if they feel they can manage it. This is something best discussed with a doctor and depends on each woman's unique circumstances. However, it is very important that pregnant and breastfeeding women take care to eat properly during non-fasting hours if they choose to fast. It is also important that women do not feel any shame or guilt in breaking the fast if they feel they must; no one has the right to put pressure on the pregnant or breastfeeding woman to exceed her body's limits. In fact, this allowance not to fast should be considered a mercy from *Allaah* The Almighty and not a punishment.

Likewise, women should not fast just because they do not want to have to make their fasts up later: the wellbeing of the baby and the mother's health should be the prime consideration in deciding whether to fast. Take the fast one day at a time: it is not a competition with others but an act of worship for the sake of *Allaah* Most High.

Women who are ailing or taking medications during the day should consult their doctors in order to see if it will be possible for them to fast and to change the schedule of their medications.

Whether a woman misses days of fasting due to menstruation, childbirth, pregnancy, breastfeeding or illness, these missed days should be made up before the next *Ramadhaan* comes. Depending on a woman's circumstances and based on the different opinions of Islamic schools of jurisprudence, making up the fast may be as simple as fasting one day for each day missed during *Ramadhaan*, or it may require that she feeds one poor person each day either in addition to, or in place of, fasting herself. Women should consult reliable books or scholars to understand their obligations in this regard. *Fiqh us-Sunnah* by *As-Sayyid Saabiq* رحمته is an excellent source of reliable information on how to make up missed days of fasting.

Understanding and respecting your body's physical needs and limits during *Ramadhaan* will help you to have more energy for taking care of your home, family and other responsibilities.

Spiritual preparation



The arrival of *Ramadhaan* is one of the great blessings that *Allaah* bestows upon His Muslim slave, because *Ramadhaan* is one of the occasions of good in which the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed. It is the month of the Quran and of decisive battles in the history of our religion.

Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): **{Say: 'In the Bounty of Allaah, and in His Mercy (i.e. Islam and the Quran); —therein let them rejoice.' That is better than what (the wealth) they amass.}** [Quran 10:58]

We must prepare ourselves spiritually as well as physically before *Ramadhaan* comes around. We all seem to get caught up with our hectic schedules until *Ramadhaan* approaches and we panic. Many

people busy themselves with spring-cleaning and refurbishing their homes and stocking their refrigerators, but often we forget to warm up and fine-tune ourselves in readiness for this month.

Here are some means of "spring cleaning the soul":

Purification:

Whenever a guest comes, we prepare in advance for his arrival by cleaning around the house. We should do this for our annual guest called *Ramadhaan* as well. However, the scrubbing should not just be restricted to our physical surroundings; it should include the purification of our sins.




The Prophet ﷺ when speaking about purification for *Ramadhaan* said: ***"Whoever doesn't desist from speaking falsehood and acting upon it, Allaah has no need that he desist from his food and drink."*** (Al-Bukhaari)


Fasting in Sha'baan:

It was narrated that *Abu Salamah* said, "I heard 'Aa'ishah ؓ say, 'I would owe fasts from the previous *Ramadhaan* and I would not be able to make them up except in *Sha'baan*.'" (Narrated by Al-Bukhaari (1849) and Muslim (1146).)

Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar ؒ said, "From her keenness to do that in *Sha'baan* it may be understood that it is not permissible to delay



making them up until another Ramadhaan begins." (Fath al-Baari (4/191))


It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah  said, "*The Messenger of Allaah  used to fast until we said, 'He will not break his fast,' and he used to not fast until we said, 'He will not fast.' And I never saw the Messenger of Allaah  complete a month of fasting except Ramadhaan, and I never saw him fast more in any month than in Sha'baan.*" (Narrated by Al-Bukhaari (1868) and Muslim (1156).)

It was narrated that Usaamah ibn Zayd  said, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, I do not see you fasting in any month as you fast in Sha'baan?' He said: ***“That is a month that people neglect between Rajab and Ramadhaan, but it is a month in which people’s deeds are taken up to the Lord of the Worlds and I would like my deeds to be taken up when I am fasting.”***" (Narrated by An-Nasaa'i (2357); classed as *Hasan* by al-Albaani in *Saheeh An-Nasaa'i*.)



This *Hadeeth* explains the wisdom behind fasting in *Sha'baan*, which is that it is a month in which deeds are taken up (to *Allaah*). Some of the scholars mentioned another reason, which is that this fasting is like *Sunnah* prayers offered beforehand in relation to the obligatory prayer; they prepare the soul for performing the obligatory action, and the same may be said of fasting *Sha'baan* before *Ramadhaan*.

One of the biggest causes of not utilizing the month of *Ramadhaan* to the optimum is that we are not accustomed to fasting regularly throughout the year. Some people only fast once a year during this month, which makes it hard for them to go without food and drink.

The Mother of the Believers 'Aa'ishah  observes, "*The Messenger of Allaah  never fasted an entire month other than Ramadhaan and I did not see him fast more than he did in Sha'baan.*"

One of the best ways to prepare for *Ramadhaan* is by fasting in the month before and on Mondays and Thursdays as well as the "White Days" i.e., the 13th, 14th and 15th of each month. The Prophet  also fasted on Monday and Thursdays every week and on these three days every month. Fasting should be an act of worship that we do all year round not just in *Ramadhaan* so it becomes second nature to us.

Following the Sunnah of fasting during voluntary fasts

It is recommended for Muslims to eat a pre-dawn meal (called *Suhoor* in Arabic) each day before the fast begins. The Prophet  is reported by Anas  to have said: "***Eat a pre-dawn meal for there are blessings in it.***" [Al-Bukhaari & Muslim]

Other narrations report the Prophet ﷺ as saying: ***"You should eat [the] pre-dawn meal for it is a blessed nourishment."*** (An-Nasaa'i)

"The pre-dawn meal is blessed so do not neglect it even if you only take a sip of water. Verily, Allaah and His angels pray for those who have pre-dawn meals." (Ahmad)

The pre-dawn meal provides energy and other benefits to the fasting Muslim during the day so it makes good sense to get up early to have *Suhoor*. This is better accomplished if you sleep early so try to think about how you will organize your schedule once *Ramadhaan* begins. If you typically have trouble waking up for the *Fajr* (dawn) prayer, a new schedule before *Ramadhaan* may be the motivation you need to change your habits for the better even after *Ramadhaan* has ended. *Ramadhaan* is a great opportunity that comes once a year to renew your relationship and commitment to *Allaah* The Almighty.

If you are accustomed to drinking tea or coffee in the morning or during the day, be aware that caffeine withdrawal can cause severe headaches while you are fasting. Take some time before *Ramadhaan* to wean yourself from caffeine gradually and decide whether it will be necessary to have any caffeine during the non-fasting hours in *Ramadhaan*. It may seem like a minor thing to worry about before the commencement of the Holy month, but

many Muslims experience the phenomenon of caffeine withdrawal and its symptoms, and know to prepare themselves ahead of time.

Ramadhaan is also an opportunity to renew relationships that may have been broken during the year. We should try and clear up any disputes or bad feelings with other Muslims so we may start this month afresh.

Make a Du`aa' list

It was narrated from some of the *Salaf* (Companions) that they used to pray to *Allaah* for six months that they would live until *Ramadhaan*, then they would pray for five months afterwards that He would accept it from them.

The Muslim should pray to his Lord to let him live until *Ramadhaan* with a strong religious commitment and good physical health, and he should ask Him to help him obey Him during the month, and ask Him to accept his good deeds from Him.

Ramadhaan is the month to ask for everything – both related to this life and the Hereafter. Let us not wait until the last 10 nights to make special *Du`aa'*, and start making our lists now, and add to it as more things come our way. Getting into the habit of making *Du'aa* in the months preceding *Ramadhaan* will help us remember to make constant *Du`aa'* in this month when *Dua`a'* is accepted.

While making *Du'aa* for ourselves, let us not forget to ask *Allaah* The Almighty to forgive our brothers and sisters. According to a *Hadeeth*: ***“Whoever seeks forgiveness for believing men and believing women, Allaah will write for him a good deed for each believing man and believing woman.”*** [At-Tabarani, classed as *Hasan* by al-Albaani]

Many of us do not spend as much time as we should do in *Du'aa*. Even if we do, we rush our *Du'aa* and our hearts and minds are not present whilst supplicating to *Allaah* The Almighty. Thus, we lose out on much of the benefits and blessings of our supplications. We must give more attention to our supplications and try to concentrate more and be more sincere, imagining *Allaah* The Almighty watching us supplicate to Him. We should humble ourselves in front of *Allaah* The Almighty, shed tears if we can and have full hope that *Allaah* The Almighty will accept our supplications – if not in this world then in the Hereafter.

Allaah The Almighty Says in the Quran (what means): ***{When my servants ask you concerning me, (tell them) I am indeed close (to them). I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on me.}***

The rank of *Du'aa* has an honored and exalted status in the eyes of *Allaah* The Almighty that the Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Nothing is more***

honorable to Allaah the Most High than Du'aa." (Saheeh al-Jami` no.5268).

It is the most excellent form of worship. He also said: *"The most excellent worship is Du'aa."* (Saheeh Al-Jami` no. 1133)

Thus, let us get into the habit of making sincere *Du'aa* from deep within our hearts and let us not be heedless when supplicating to *Allaah*. What better time than now for us to get into the habit of making more intense and sincere *Du'aa*. So by the time *Ramadhaan* arrives we would have already got into the habit of making long, sincere and intense *Duaa*, which will readily be accepted during this blessed month especially whilst we are fasting and in the latter part of the nights during *Tahajjud*.

It may help to make a list of what we should ask of *Allaah* The Almighty during *Du'aa* which we can refer to as a reminder as this may help us to make our *Du'aa* longer and more sincere covering everything we want to ask of *Allaah* The Almighty.

Write your goals for Ramadhaan



Write out a list of your goals for *Ramadhaan* as part of your preparation for the month and put it somewhere you will see it, and make *Du'aa* for your success in fulfilling your objectives. This could include anything such as praying all of your *Fardh* (obligatory) and *Sunnah* prayers, reading the entire Quran, giving a certain amount of money in charity every day, making *I'tikaaf* (staying in seclusion) in the *Masjid*, leaving one serious sin and sincerely turning back to *Allaah* The Almighty.

Look at your objectives and try to plan out how to realize them in this month.

Reflect on death and make the right intention

So many Muslims have passed away since last month. So many people have not made it to *Ramadhaan* this year. Last year was

their very last *Ramadhaan*. Will you make it to this *Ramadhaan*? Will this be your last *Ramadhaan*?



Aim to strive this *Ramadhaan*. With a very small amount of effort, such as just making a small intention or adding a few extra acts of worship, we pray that *Allaah* The Almighty will help our hearts soften and honor us with making it easy to turn to Him and open up to Him.



Accustom yourself to small acts of worship consistently

To help condition your heart for this blessed month, intensify your worship before *Ramadhaan* begins – just a small, consistent amount is enough. The Prophet ﷺ told us: ***“The deeds most loved by Allaah are those done regularly, however small.”*** (*Al-Bukhaari & Muslim*)

The best way of preparing to fast for 30 consecutive days in *Ramadhaan* is to fast the voluntary fasts, such as on Monday and Thursday.



Abu Hurayrah ﷺ reported that the most the Prophet ﷺ would fast would be Monday and Thursday. He was asked about that and he said: ***“The deeds of people are presented to Allaah on every Monday and Thursday. Allaah forgives every Muslim except those who have cut off ties with each other. He says: “Leave them for later.”*** (*Ahmad*)

It is also from the *Sunnah* to fast the white days (13, 14 and 15th of each Islamic month). *Abu Tharr Al-Ghifari*  said, “*The Messenger of Allaah*  said: *'O Abu Tharr! If you fast three days of every month, then fast the 13th, the 14th and the 15th [these are call the al-Ayyaam al-Beedh, the white days]'*”.
(*Ahmad, An-Nasaa'i, at-Tirmithi; Saheeh*)

Therefore, we should fast these days in order to prepare for the fasting of *Ramadhaan* and even after *Ramadhaan* we should continue to do so for fasting will intercede for us on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet  said: *"Fasting and the Quran will intercede for the slave on the Day of Resurrection. Fasting will say: "O My Lord! I prevented him from food and desires, so accept my intercession for him." And the Quran will say: "I prevented him from sleep during the night, so accept my intercession for him." He*  *said: 'And they will (be allowed to) intercede.'"* (*Ahmad, at-Tabarani, Al-Hakim, Saheeh*)

Engage in Thikr (remembrance of Allaah The Almighty)



It was narrated that *Abu Hurayrah*  said that the Messenger of *Allaah*  said: ***‘Whoever says Subhaan Allaah wa bi hamdih (praise and glory be to Allaah) 100 times, morning and evening, his sins will be erased even if they are like the foam on the sea.’*** (Al-Bukhaari & Muslim)

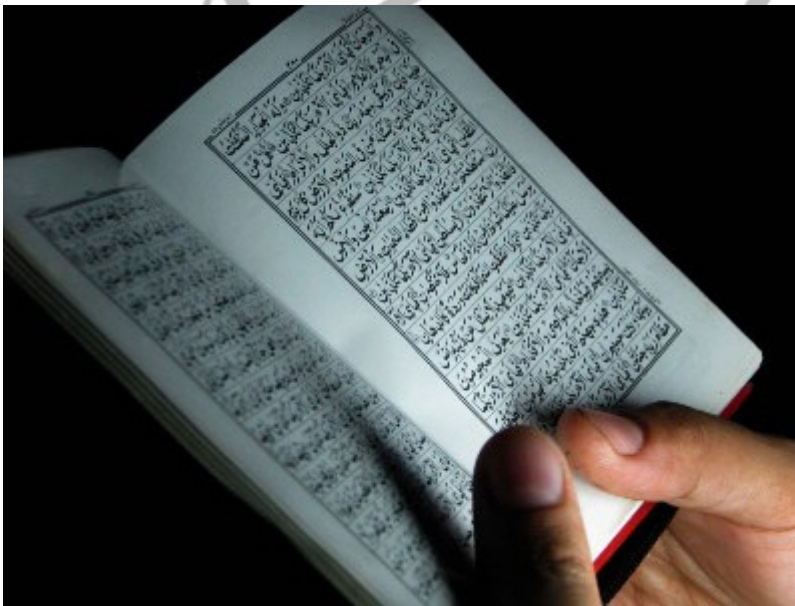
According to another narration, if a person says “*Subhaan Allaah* (glory be to *Allaah*),” *100 times, a thousand good deeds are recorded for him and a thousand bad deeds are wiped away.*” (Muslim 2073)

Remember *Allaah* The Almighty all the time, even when you go shopping for groceries and other household items in preparation for *Ramadhaan*. According to a narration: ***“Whoever enters a market and says: “Laa ilaha illAllaah wahdahu la shareeka lah, la hul***

mulku wa lahul hamdu yuhyi wa yumeetu wa huwa hayyun laa yamoot, bi yadihil khair, wa huwa ‘ala kulli shayin qadeer.’”

*[There is nothing worthy of worship except Allaah, alone without partner, to Him belongs dominion and praise; He causes life and death and He is the Living and does not die; in His Hand is all the good, and He is over all things competent] **Allaah will write for them a million good deeds and erase a million bad deeds and raise him a million levels.*** (At-Tirmithi, classed as Hasan by al-Albaani)

Reciting the Quran



Allaah The Exalted Says (what means): {The month of Ramadhaan is the one in which the Quran was sent down, a guidance for mankind, clear proofs for the guidance, the Criterion; so whoever amongst you witnesses this month, let him fast it.} [Quran 2:185]

Ramadhaan is the month in which the Quran was first revealed so it is the month of the Quran. We should devote much of this blessed month reciting the Quran.

Az-Zuhri رحمته used to say upon the coming of *Ramadhaan*, “It is only about reciting the Quran and feeding the poor.”

Abdur-Raziq رحمته said, “When *Ramadhaan* came, Sufyan Ath-Thawri would give up all acts of (voluntary) worship and devote himself to the recitation of the Quran.”

In preparation of *Ramadhaan*, we should start building a close relationship with the Quran for it will intercede for us on the Day of Judgment. According to a *Hadeeth*: ***"Recite the Holy Quran as much as you can for it will come as an intercessor for its reciter on the Day of Judgement"*** (Muslim)

‘Aa’ishah رضي الله عنها related that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: ***"Indeed the one who recites the Quran beautifully, smoothly, and precisely, will be in the company of the noble and obedient angels. As for the one who recites with difficulty, stammering or stumbling through its verses, then he will have twice that reward."*** (Al-Bukhaari & Muslim)

There are ten rewards for every letter recited from the Quran in normal times but in *Ramadhaan* these rewards are multiplied manifold, as the *Hadeeth* says: ***"Whoever reads a letter from the Book of Allaah, he will have a reward, and this reward will be***

multiplied by ten. I am not saying that 'Alif, Laam, Meem' (a combination of letters frequently mentioned in the Holy Quran) is a letter, rather I am saying that 'Alif' is a letter, 'Laam' is a letter and 'Meem' is a letter.' (At-Tirmithi)

Thus, we should get into the habit of reciting the Quran, and acknowledge the meaningfulness of its verses and try our best to implement its teachings in our daily lives.

We should set realistic targets for how much we should begin to recite each day, recite as much as we can manage and then build up gradually.

Make the most of the opportunity that the month of *Ramadhaan* brings to strengthen your connection to the Book of *Allaah*, by utilizing the following means:

- Read the verses correctly. The way to do that is to have your reading corrected by someone who knows how to read well. If you cannot read well, then practice by listening to tapes of expert reciters.
- Revise what *Allaah* The Almighty has enabled you to memorize, and memorize some more.
- Read the *Tafseer* (commentary) on the verses, either by looking up the verses you do not understand in reliable books of *Tafseer* such as *Tafseer al-Baghawi* and *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* and

Tafseer al-Sa'di, or by making a program to read a book of *Tafseer*.

- Strive to apply the commands that you read in the Book of *Allaah*.

Praying voluntary prayers

In *Ramadhaan* every voluntary prayer carries the reward of a *Fardh* prayer in normal times and there is nothing more rewarding than a *Fardh* prayer so one can imagine the immense rewards that are available in *Ramadhaan* for every voluntary prayer we pray.

The Prophet ﷺ said: ***“Whoever draws near to Allaah during it (Ramadhaan) with a single characteristic from the characteristics of (voluntary) goodness, he is like whoever performs an obligatory act in other times. And whoever performs an obligatory act during it, he is like whoever performed seventy obligatory acts in other times.”*** [Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 1887]

In order for us to take advantage of these immense rewards we should start begin now by praying all of the daily *Sunnah* and *Nafilah* (voluntary) prayers so by the time *Ramadhaan* comes we will already be in the habit of praying them and so we can increase our voluntary prayers even more so during *Ramadhaan*. This would be difficult if we were not in the habit of praying *Sunnah* and *Nafilah* prayers in normal times.

By increasing our voluntary worship we can gain closeness to *Allaah* as well as the company of the Prophet ﷺ in *Jannah* (Paradise).

Rabi'ah ibn Malik al-Aslami ربيع بن مالك reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Ask (anything)."** *Rabi'ah* ربيع said, "I ask of you to be your companion in Paradise." The Prophet ﷺ said: **"Or anything else?"** *Rabi'ah* ربيع said, "That is all." The Prophet ﷺ said to him: **"Then help me by making many prostrations (i.e., supererogatory prayers)."**

Sincere Repentance

Ramadhaan is the month where we can gain mercy and forgiveness from *Allaah* The Almighty for all of our sins, past and present.

We should know that *Allaah* The Almighty is most merciful and most forgiving and loves to forgive. *Allaah* The Almighty Says, in a *Hadeeth Qudsi* (sacred narration): ***"O son of Aadam, if your sins were to reach the clouds of the sky and you would then seek My forgiveness, I would forgive you."***

When a person sins and then sincerely turns to *Allaah* The Almighty for forgiveness, one finds *Allaah* The Almighty ready to accept his repentance and to forgive him, as this verse indicates (which means): ***{And whoever does a wrong or wrongs himself,***

but then seeks forgiveness from Allaah, he will find Allaah forgiving and merciful. [Quran 4:110]

Allaah The Almighty loves repentance and loves those who turn to him in repentance: {Truly Allaah loves those who turn [to Him] in repentance, and He loves those who keep themselves in purity.} [Quran 2:222]

Therefore, we should get into the habit now of repenting to *Allaah* so that in *Ramadhaan* we will make the best of repentance to *Allaah The Almighty* and continue to do so throughout everyday of our lives.

How unfortunate is a person who after the end of *Ramadhaan* does not gain any forgiveness of his sins from *Allaah* but ends up piling more sins onto his account!

Generosity and Charity



The Prophet ﷺ became even more generous in *Ramadhaan* than

usual. *Ramadhaan* is a time for generosity and giving. It is a time when we think about those who have less than us as well as thank *Allaah* The Almighty for everything he has given us. *Ramadhaan* is an honorable and blessed month, and like everything else, the rewards for generosity are multiplied in it.

The Prophet ﷺ said: *“The best charity is that given in **Ramadhaan.**”* (At-Tirmithi).

The Prophet ﷺ said: *“He who feeds a fasting person will gain the same reward as he will, without decreasing from the fasting person’s rewards.”* (Ahmad).

Therefore, we should get into the habit of giving in charity now so that by the time *Ramadhaan* arrives we would increase in our generosity, giving to those less fortunate than ourselves. We should give whatever we can afford as *Allaah* The Almighty looks at our intentions.

Surely in the Hereafter we will regret that which we did not spend in the path of *Allaah* The Almighty.

Controlling the tongue

Ramadhaan is a time where we must control our desires as well as our tongues. The Prophet ﷺ said: *“Fasting is not (abstaining) from eating and drinking only, but also from vain speech and foul language. If one of you is being cursed or annoyed, he*

should say: 'I am fasting, I am fasting.' (Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Hibbaan)

Therefore, we must protect our tongue from idle speech and foul language. Protecting the tongue is preventing it from lying, backbiting, slander, tale-carrying, false speech and other things that have been forbidden in the Quran and *Sunnah*.

Those who control their tongues are from the best of Muslims.

The Prophet ﷺ was asked, “Which Muslim is best?” He responded: *“The one from whose tongue and hand all other Muslims are safe.”* (At-Tirmithi, #2504)

We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that by the time *Ramadhaan* comes we will all of a sudden break a lifetime habit and control our tongues. This is, again, a big deception; we must start controlling our tongues now, for changing bad habits of a lifetime is not an overnight process.

So how can we control our tongues? Easily: by thinking before speaking; not simply talking without considering beforehand what we are about to say.

Thinking before speaking is important, but what is more important is that, before speaking, we should think whether or not what we are about to speak is going to please *Allaah* The Almighty or displease Him.

If one is in doubt as to whether what they are about to say will please or anger *Allaah*, then it would be best for them to refrain from saying it. If one has nothing good to say, then surely it is best for him to say nothing at all. One must, at all times, bear in mind that *everyone* will be held accountable for *everything* they say in their lives, hence we must start taking responsibility for all that comes out of our mouths immediately, else we may come to regret not doing so when it is too late. Therefore, we must get into the habit of thinking before speaking.

Let us begin to control our tongues now so that by the time *Ramadhaan* comes we will have adopted this good habit and will have become used to controlling our tongues and refraining from saying all that which may anger or displease *Allaah* The Almighty.

We must also remember that our fasting will be in vain in case we do not hold ourselves from speaking carelessly.

The Prophet ﷺ said: ***“Allaah does not need the fast of one who does not abandon false speech or acting according to his false speech.”*** [Saheeh Al-Bukhaari]

Improving Character and Manners

The Prophet ﷺ came to perfect the character of man and the best of this *Ummah* are those with the best of characters.

The Prophet ﷺ used to say: *"The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character."* (Al-Bukhaari)

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"There is nothing heavier in the scales of the Hereafter than good character."* (At-Tirmithi & Abu Daawood)

The Prophet ﷺ also said: *"The best loved by me and the nearest to me on the seats on the Day of Resurrection are those who have the best manners and conduct amongst you, who are intimate, are on good terms with others and are humble, and the most hated by me and who will be on the furthest seats from me are those who are talkative and arrogant."* (At-Tirmithi)



As is with making any big change, perfecting our character and manners cannot be done overnight, but we must start now so that by the time *Ramadhaan* comes we would have gained momentum in making the necessary changes to our characters in order for us to be the best of this *Ummah* and those closest to *Allaah*.


If good character and manners are the heaviest on the scales, then imagine how much more heavier they will be if we adopt this good character and these good manners during *Ramadhaan*?

Let us strive to perfect our manners, character and conduct, towards others as well ourselves; and realize that these good deeds will be the heaviest on our scales, which will enable us to


eventually reach the highest ranks of *Jannah* and enable us to be among those closest to *Allaah* The Almighty.

Moderation in eating

Al-Miqdaam ibn Maadiy-Karib  said, "I heard the Messenger of *Allaah*  say: **"No human ever filled a vessel worse than the stomach. Sufficient for any son of Adam are some morsels to keep his back straight. But if it must be more, then one third for his food, one third for his drink and one third for his breath."** (Ahmad, At-Tirmithi, An-Nasaa'i, Ibn Majah)

Ibraaheem An-Nakha'i, one of the teachers of Imam *Abu Haneefah*  said, "The people were ruined before you because of three characteristics of theirs: too much talking, too much eating, and too much sleeping."

Excessive eating is undeniably a cause of many diseases, many of which are fatal, but it also prevents a person from putting in all his efforts in the worship of *Allaah* The Almighty.

Ash-Shaafi'i  said, "I have not filled myself in sixteen years because filling oneself makes the body heavy, removes clear understanding, induces sleep and makes one weak for worship."

Many of those who fast during *Ramadhaan* make up for all the food they miss during the day at *Iftaar* and after *Iftaar* by not

stopping eating. This goes against the very objective of *Ramadhaan*, surely, which is to be moderate in eating and to empathize with those who have less to eat than we do. How will we remember the less fortunate when we keep eating before our fasts, at *Suhoor*, as well as after our fasts, in the *Iftaar*?

By controlling what we eat in the months leading to *Ramadhaan*, we will not only improve our health in the short and long term, but moderate eating will make us less heavier and enable us to maximize the amount of worship we do every day, during *Ramadhaan* and during the rest of our lives.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri رضي الله عنه said, "The test of Aadam عليه السلام was food and it is your test until the Last Day."

And, it used to be said, "Whoever takes control of his stomach consequently takes control of all good deeds."

And, "Wisdom does not reside in a full stomach."

One day, *Al-Hasan* رضي الله عنه offered some food to his companion who refused and said, "I have eaten until I am no longer able to eat." To which *Al-Hasan* رضي الله عنه said, "Subhaan Allaah! Does a Muslim eat until he is no longer able to eat?"

Emulating the Sunnah



Following the *Sunnah* is a direct command from *Allaah* The Almighty when He Says (what means): *{Say (O Muhammad to mankind): "If you (really) love Allaah, then follow me (i.e. accept Islamic monotheism, follow the Quran and the Sunnah), Allaah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.}* [Quran: 3:31]

When we follow the Prophet ﷺ in every aspect of our lives, then everything we do becomes an act of worship, even things like going to the toilet, having a bath, dressing and undressing, etc.

The Prophet ﷺ said: *“Whoever revives an aspect of my Sunnah that is forgotten after my death, he will have a reward equivalent to that of the people who follow him, without it detracting in the least from their reward.”* (At-Tirmithi)



The best habit we can adopt is the implementation of the *Sunnah* in everything we do, for thus we shall gain tremendous rewards for every act and everything we do during our life can become an act of worship to *Allaah*.

We can do this by gradually learning all or most of the *Sunnah* and *Duaas* of every aspect of our day, for instance, waking up, going to bed, entering the *Masjid* or leaving it, entering the house or leaving it, dressing and undressing, and so on. So, let us get into the habit right now of implementing the *Sunnah* as much as is possible for us in our daily lives, so by the time *Ramadhaan* is here, we can continue implementing *Sunnah* and gain multiple rewards for them.

Many people misunderstand the true nature of fasting, and thus they make it an occasion for eating and drinking, making special sweets and staying up late at night and watching satellite TV, which in turn airs special *Ramadhaan* shows for the service of such people. They make preparations for these things long before *Ramadhaan*, lest they miss out on some food, or lest prices go up. They prepare by buying food, preparing drinks and looking at the satellite TV guide so they can choose which shows to follow and which to ignore. They are truly unaware of the real nature of fasting in *Ramadhaan*; they take worship and piety out of the month and make it an occasion for their bellies and their eyes.

However, others are aware of the real nature of fasting in the month of *Ramadhaan*, so they start to prepare from *Sha'baan*, and some of them even start before that. Sincere repentance is among

the best ways of preparing for the month of *Ramadhaan*. This is obligatory at all times, but because of the approach of a great and blessed month, it is even more important to hasten to repent from sins between you and your Lord. It is important to make amends between you and other people by giving them their rights, so that when the blessed month begins you may busy yourself with acts of worship with a clean heart and peace of mind. *Allaah* The Almighty Says (what means): ***{And all of you beg Allaah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful.}*** [Quran 24:31]

It was narrated from *al-Agharr ibn Yasaar*  that the Prophet  said: ***“O people, repent to Allaah for I repent to Him one hundred times each day.”*** (Narrated by Muslim (2702))

Other actions that a Muslim can undertake in preparation for *Ramadhaan*, include:

- Seeking knowledge in order to be able to follow the rulings on fasting and to understand the virtues of *Ramadhaan*.
- Hastening to complete any tasks that may distract the Muslim from doing acts of worship.
- Sitting with one’s family members – wife and children – to tell them of the rulings on fasting and encourage the young ones to fast.

- Preparing some books which can be read at home or given to the imam of the mosque to read to the people during *Ramadhaan*.
- Keeping away from all *Haraam* things and whatever may lead to them.
- Paying attention to ensuring that your family avoids falling into any *Haraam* thing or whatever may lead to that, in a wise manner. You could prepare a program just for them, take them out for leisure trips to permissible places, keep them away from bad friends, or look for good friends for them.
- Keeping busy with things that take priority.

Cultivate a Sleeping Pattern and Daily Routine

Get into the habit of sleeping early, whilst paying attention to the etiquette of sleep as prescribed in the *Sharee'ah* (Islamic legislation), both actions and words. Read some Quran or some beneficial books before going to sleep, which is a good habit, especially if you have not yet completed your daily portion of the Quran – so do not go to sleep until you have completed it.

Then wake up before *Suhoor* (pre-dawn meal), allowing enough time to recite *Du'aa'* (supplications), because this time – the last third of the night – is a special time. This is the time when *Allaah* The Almighty descends, and *Allaah* The Almighty has praised those who seek His forgiveness at this time, and has promised those who call upon Him at this time that He will answer them, and

that He will accept the repentance of those who repent to Him at this time. So do not neglect this great opportunity.

Friday:

Friday is the best day of the week, so you should have a special program of worship on this day, in which you pay attention to the following:

Coming early to Jumu'ah prayer.

Staying in the mosque after 'Asr prayer, and keeping busy with reading Quran and making *Du'aa* until the last hour of this day, for that is a time when *Du'aas* are answered.

Make this day an opportunity for completing some of your deeds that you did not finish during the week, such as completing your weekly portion of Quran, or finishing reading a book or listening to a tape and other good deeds.

The last ten days of Ramadhaan:

The last ten days of *Ramadhaan* include *Laylat al-Qadar* (Night of Decree) which is better than a thousand months. Hence, it is prescribed for a person to observe *I'tikaaf* ("retreat" for the purpose of worship) in the mosque during these ten days, as the Prophet ﷺ used to do, seeking *Laylat al-Qadar*. Whoever can observe *I'tikaaf* at this time, this is a great blessing from *Allaah*.

Whoever cannot observe *I'tikaaf* for the entire period should do as much as he is able to.

If he is not able to do *I'tikaaf* at all, then he should try to spend the nights in worship. Praying *Qiyaam*, reading Quran, remembering *Allaah* and making *Du'aa*. He should prepare for that by resting during the day so that he will be able to stay up at night.

Each person can formulate a plan and schedule according to his own circumstances, which is based on the *Sunnah* that is proven from the Prophet ﷺ. It does not mean that everything mentioned here is an obligatory duty; rather it includes many things that are *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) and *Mustahabb* (recommended).

The most beloved of actions to *Allaah* are those which are continuous even if they are little. At the beginning of the month a person may be keen to do acts of worship, then he may slow down. Beware of that, and strive to persist in all the actions that you do in this blessed month.

The Muslim should strive to organize his time in this blessed month so that he will not miss out on a great opportunity to do more good and righteous deeds. For example, a person should try to buy all the things that the family needs before the month begins, and he should buy day-to-day needs at times when the stores are not crowded, and visits to friends and family should be organized in such a way that they do not distract from acts of worship.

Make it a priority to undertake several acts of worship and draw closer to *Allaah* in this blessed month. Before the start of *Ramadhaan*, resolve to go to the mosque early at the times of prayer, and to complete the Book of *Allaah*, and to regularly pray *Qiyaam al-Layl* in this great month, and to spend (in charity) what you can of your wealth.

Conclusion

Every Muslim should prepare to welcome the blessed month of *Ramadhaan* by strengthening his relationship with the Quran, busying himself with the spirit of fasting, and recharging his spiritual batteries to prepare himself to make the whole blessed month of *Ramadhaan*, which is an occasion of sincere obedience.

Ramadhaan is a recurring season that occurs in the life of the faithful, as individuals and as an *Ummah*, once a year. It is intended by *Allaah* The Almighty to help us to recharge our spiritual batteries and thus prepare us for the great mission of realizing His will on earth. Therefore, in order to benefit from *Ramadhaan*, we would do well to prepare for it by opening our hearts and minds to embrace it.

In preparation for *Ramadhaan*, we should empower ourselves by learning as much as we can about the precise laws as well as the benefits of fasting. We should ensure that we gain true benefits from our fasting, let us make sure to realize the spirit of fasting: this can only be done by abstaining, not only from food, drink, and

sexual intercourse, but also by strictly restraining our minds, hearts as well as our eyes, ears, hands, tongue, and so on.

We must embrace the spirit of fasting as stressed in the *Hadeeth*: to be charitable and compassionate as much as we can. We should strengthen our relationship with the Quran; for *Ramadhaan* is the month of the Quran. We should engage in *Thikr* and condition ourselves to make it second nature and build up our community through acts of charity and compassion and extending help to those in need as much as we can.

Let us pray that we come out of *Ramadhaan* with our faith recharged, gaining strength in our faith and commitment and relationship with *Allaah* The Almighty.