

الإِسْتِعْدَادُ لِشَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ

PREPARATION FOR THE MONTH OF RAMADHĀN



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الاستعداد لشهر رمضان

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What is meant by preparation for Ramadhān?

Preparation means to gather one's thoughts and train one's body upon the obedience of Allāh for the coming of Ramadhān. The Muslim should prepare himself with different *'ibādāt* (acts of worship) before the month of Ramadhān enters.

The example of the arrival of Ramadhān is like *a father who leaves his children for a whole year, and then after one year, he calls his children mentioning that he will return.*

There are three types of children in this regards:

- **The first type of child:** *Prepares for his father's arrival;* he prepares the house, different dishes of foods, etc. this one is considered to be righteous towards his father.
- **The second type of child:** *Does not prepare beforehand, however delays and waits for his father to arrive to start preparing,* this one is not considered to be righteous, and is deficient towards the rights of his father.
- **The third type of child:** *Does not prepare at all for his fathers arrival,* not beforehand, nor after he arrives. This one is not righteous towards his father at all, rather he is disobedient towards the rights of his father.

Thus, if you prepare yourself before the month of Ramadhān, without a doubt, you have done good, whereas if you do not prepare, then you have done something wrong.

Preparing for Ramadhān is a sign of Tawfīq (success) from Allāh

An example we see in the biography of the Prophet ﷺ is that some of the *Sahābah* (Companions) prepared themselves for battle beforehand while the *Munāfiqūn* (Hypocrites) did not prepare themselves.

Allāh says about the Munāfiqūn:

﴿وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً وَلَكِنْ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ انْبِعَاثَهُمْ فَثَبَّطَهُمْ وَقِيلَ
أَقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ﴾

“And if they had intended to march out, certainly, they would have made some preparation for it, but Allāh was averse to their being sent forth, so He made them lag behind, and it was said (to them), “Sit you among those who sit (at home)”.”

{Sūrah Tawbah (9):46}

Due to them not preparing, Allāh prevented them from being able to perform the act of worship and fighting alongside with the Prophet ﷺ, as a punishment for their lack of preparation.

Oh my brother, Oh my sister, if you want to be from those who are saved from the Hellfire, prepare beforehand. Don't be from those who do not prepare for acts of worship and as a result, are faced with not being able to fulfil the act of worship.

The worst type of failure that one can face is one who is called towards obedience, yet he doesn't accept (i.e. adhere) to the call.”

Preparing for Ramadhān is not an innovation

Rather this was the way of the Prophet ﷺ, the Companions, and the *Salaf us-Sālih* (Righteous Predecessors). In the month of *Sha'bān*, the Prophet ﷺ would fast the majority of the month.

‘Ā’isha Bint Abī Bakr رضي الله عنهما, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ narrates regarding her husband:

”وَمَا رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - ﷺ - اسْتَكْمَلَ صِيَامَ شَهْرٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا رَمَضَانَ ، وَمَا رَأَيْتُهُ فِي شَهْرٍ أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُ صِيَامًا فِي شَعْبَانَ“

“I never saw Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) fasting for a whole month except the month of Ramadhān, and did not see him fasting in any month more than in the month of Sha'bān.”

(Bukhāry and Muslim)

Why? Ibn Rajab رحمه الله mentions the reason why for this, he says that fasting in the month of *Sha'bān* is like training for the body so that when Ramadhān comes, one is not faced with difficulties and hardship.

It is common nowadays that one sees the people in the month of Ramadhān being lazy, tired and extremely exhausted. The reason for that is due to not preceding Ramadhān with preparation, thus their bodies feel tired and are quickly worn out.

‘Ā’isha رضي الله عنها used to also prepare herself for Ramadhān. There were particular days that she had not fasted from the previous year (for one reason or another) that she would strive to make up before the following year, this was from her preparation.

The Sahābah, Tabi’ūn, and those who came after them would prepare for Ramadhān as well. They would supplicate six months prior to reaching Ramadhān, asking Allāh to allow them to reach it, and six months after the Month, supplicating for it to be accepted.

Ask yourself: *Why were their hearts connected? Why did the Salaf make du'ā six months before the coming of Ramadhān?*

Yahya Ibn Abi Kathīr رحمه الله said: It used to be said (i.e. amongst the Salaf), “Oh Allāh, keep me safe for Ramadhān, keep Ramadhān safe for me and accept it from me.”¹

The Prophet ﷺ would give glad tidings with the coming Ramadhān. It was narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that he said:

”أَتَاكُمْ رَمَضَانُ شَهْرٌ مُبَارَكٌ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ صِيَامَهُ تَفْتَحُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَتُغْلَقُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ الْجَحِيمِ وَتُعَلُّ فِيهِ مَرَدَّةُ الشَّيَاطِينِ لِلَّهِ فِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ مِنْ حَرَمٍ خَيْرَهَا فَقَدْ حُرِمَ“

“The month of Ramadhān has come to you, the Blessed Month. Allāh has ordained upon you fasting. During this Month, the gates of Paradise are opened...”

(Reported by An-Nasā’iy and Imām Ahmad)²

In another wording of the Hadīth, it mentions تَفْتَحُ (*tufattahu*) which creates the meaning of *mubālagha* (emphasis/exaggeration), ‘to be wide open’, contrary to تُفْتَحُ (*tuftahu*) which is derived from the same root however it doesn’t have the same emphasised meaning and simply means to ‘to be open’.

There is a night in this month (i.e. *Laylat ul-Qadr*) that is better than a thousand months.

Look at how the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ described Ramdhān, that which is a gift from Allāh, to us.

The Muslim is pleased with the Blessing and the Bounty of Allāh upon him and that Allāh has allowed him to reach the Month of Ramadhān. Allāh says:

¹ اللَّهُمَّ سَلِّمْ لِي مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، وَسَلِّمْ رَمَضَانَ لِي، وَتَسَلِّمْهُ مِنِّي مُتَقَبَّلًا¹

² This Hadīth has a break in the chain of narration however it was declared Hasan by some of the scholars due to other supporting narrations and Shaykh Al-Albānī said that is authentic due to other supporting narrations (refer to *Sahīh At-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb*).

﴿قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ﴾

“Say: “In the Bounty of Allāh, and in His Mercy (i.e. Islām and the Qur’ān); -therein let them rejoice.” That is better than what (the wealth) they amass”

{Sūrah Yūnus (10):58}

It also comes in some lines of poetry:

Ramadhān has arrived, the field of worship

To purify the hearts from corruption

So fulfil its rights by statement and action

And take your provisions for the Hereafter

Whoever plants seeds and does not water them

Will be filled with regret on the day of harvest

The intent of this is that the Month of *Rajab* is the month of sowing your seeds, the Month of *Sha’bān* is the month of watering them and the Month of *Ramadhān* is the month of harvest.

The Arrival of Ramadhān is a Blessing from Allāh

Talhah Ibn ‘Ubaydillāh رضي الله عنه saw two men in his dream, the first of those two men died as a *Shahīd* (a martyr), and the second one died a year later, however he didn’t die as a *Shahīd*. Talhah saw that the second man entered Jannah before the first man who was a martyr. This amazed him greatly, so he went to the Prophet ﷺ to ask him about this.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Did the second man not meet another Ramadhān? Did he not pray such and such amount of prayers?” Talhah رضي الله عنه said: “Yes, he did.” The Prophet ﷺ said: “Indeed, the difference between these two men is like the distance between the heaven and the earth.”³

The Way of the Salaf regarding the Preparation for Ramadhān

Back to the question: *Why did the Salaf make du'ā six months before the coming of Ramadhān?*

The answer is because they understood that one who fasted another Ramadhān is better. The Salaf understood the virtues of Ramadhān and thus their hearts would always be connected to it. That is why they would make du'ā six months before Ramadhān.

Ibn Rajab رحمه الله mentioned in his book *Latā'if ul-Ma'ārif*, pg. 132 a story of a slave girl:

‘A group of the Salaf had a slave girl, they sold her to other people. When Ramadhān came close, she asked her people (i.e. new masters) what they were doing. They said: “We’re preparing for Ramadhān with this food.” She said: “*You don’t fast except for in the month of Ramadhān? I used to be with people who act like they are in Ramadhān all year long, take me back to them!*”

In this we see, the slave girl was greatly impacted by the way of the Salaf and their preparation for the month of Ramadhān.

³ This Hadīth is originally found in Ibn Mājah and the Musnad of Imām Ahmad and it was authenticated by Shaykh Al-Albāny رحمه الله.

Glad tidings to those who find it difficult to do ‘Ibādah

One who is in *Kuwait*, or *Britain*, or *Makkah* differ in their efforts in ‘*ibādah*. The reason for that is because the souls are impressionable towards those whom they are around; if those who around you are those who exert themselves in ‘*ibādah*, you will see that it will affect you. Likewise, one who is surrounded with *fusūq* (corruption) and far from obedience will be affected by them and will - generally - find it difficult to perform acts of ‘*ibādah*.

The second person who does not have any aid around him needs to put more effort into ‘*ibādah*. However, do not be sad if you don’t have any support around you! **The Prophet ﷺ said to his Companions that these type of people will get the reward of 50 from the Sahābah⁴.** That is because the Sahābah would have great support and aid around them while these people don’t have any support. *So glad tidings to you!*

If someone told you to do some work and you’ll get double your normal wage - you’d be happy to do that work. Now imagine if someone told you it would be multiplied by 50! - you’d hasten to do it! And this is the repayment in the *Dunyā* (worldly life) so what about the repayment of the *Ākhirah* (hereafter)?

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

”بَدَأَ الْإِسْلَامُ غَرِيبًا وَسَيَعُودُ غَرِيبًا فَطُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاءِ“

“*Islam began as something strange and will go back to being strange, so glad tidings to the strangers.*”

(Ibn Mājah)

⁴ Referring to the Hadīth:

فَعَلَيْكَ بِخَاصَّةِ نَفْسِكَ وَدَعِ الْعَوَامَّ فَإِنَّ مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ أَيَّامًا الصَّبْرُ فِيهِنَّ مِثْلُ الْقَبْضِ عَلَى الْجُمْرِ لِلْعَامِلِ فِيهِنَّ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ خَمْسِينَ رَجُلًا يَعْمَلُونَ مِثْلَ عَمَلِكُمْ . قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ وَزَادَنِي غَيْرُ عَتَبَةٍ قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَجْرُ خَمْسِينَ رَجُلًا مِنَّا أَوْ مِنْهُمْ قَالَ " لَا بَلْ أَجْرُ خَمْسِينَ مِنْكُمْ .

Ahead of you are the days in which patience is like holding onto a coal, for the doer (of righteous deeds) during them is the like of the reward of fifty of those who do the like of what you do." ‘Abdullāh Ibn Al-Mubārak رحمه الله said: “Other than ‘Utba also mentioned to me, that it was said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! The reward of fifty men among us, or them?’ He said: ‘No! Rather the reward of fifty men among you.’” (Tirmidhy)

And in another narration it mentions, “**and who are the strangers?**”, he ﷺ said: “**those who rectify themselves whilst the others are upon corruption.**”

There’s no other deed like Fasting!

A companion رضي الله عنه said to the Prophet ﷺ command me with an action by way of which I’ll enter paradise. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Upon you is to fast because there’s nothing similar to it!”⁵

It was narrated regarding the Sahābī in this Hadīth: We never saw smoke coming from his home during the day time after this (i.e. indicating that he was cooking), except when a guest came to him because it’s upon the Muslim to host his guest.

As it relates to fasting, there is no deed like it. The Companions رضي الله عنهم would adhere to the advice of the Prophet ﷺ and would implement it even if it was difficult for them.

⁵ The Companion was Abu Umāmah رضي الله عنه, this was reported by An-Nasā’iy

PRACTICAL WAYS TO PREPARE FOR THE BLESSED MONTH:

1. *Tawbah* (Repentance)

It's obligatory to do Tawbah all the time, but it's especially important before Ramadhān so that your heart is sound before it comes.

﴿وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

“And turn to Allāh in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.”

{Sūrah Nūr (24):31}

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنِّي أَتُوبُ فِي الْيَوْمِ إِلَيْهِ مِائَةَ مَرَّةٍ”

“O people, repent to Allāh, for I verily repent to Him one hundred times a day.”

(Muslim)

If this is the case with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), whose sins have all been forgiven, then what about us who have got countless sins? Allāhu Musta'ān!

2. *Increase in Du'ā* (Invocation/Supplication)

We already mentioned that the *Salaf* would supplicate six months (before Ramadhān) to reach it and six months after Ramadhān for acceptance.

Du'ā, by Allāh! It has an amazing effect. I have tried it many times, *Subhān Allāh*, every year I look at the things I made du'ā for, I see that Allāh has granted me those things.

Ibn Rajab رحمه الله mentions a story in his book ‘*Nūr ul-iqtibās*’ regarding three ‘*Ulamā* (scholars) who were in a state of serious poverty in a particular land wherein they were seeking knowledge. Three days passed and they didn’t eat any food. They decided that there was no choice except to ask the people to aid them financially however none of them wanted to do it. In the end they decided to *draw straws* to decide which one would go. One of them were selected, but it was still very difficult upon him and he still didn’t want to go. He went to pray 2 *rak’āt* and made *du’ā* in *Sujūd* for Allāh to increase his *rizq* (sustenance/provision). When he finished praying, a man came to them saying: “I’ve been sent by the *Amīr* (ruler).”

The *Amīr* said that he saw a dream of three men in the masjid seeking something from him. So that man gave each of them some money from the *Amir*. He then asked: “Who’s the person who was begging Allāh?” He gave him (i.e. the man who supplicated in his prayer) extra wealth and said that the ruler will come to him the next day. Yet, the ‘*Ulamā* left out of fear of *kibr* (pridefulness) and being known. [In this we see the great *fadhīl* (virtue) of *du’ā*]

3. *Being pleased with the coming of Ramadhān*

The Muslim is pleased because Ramadhān is the Month of khayr (goodness), the month of the Qur’ān and the Month of victory, many battles in Islamic history took place during this month (i.e. Battle of *Badr*).

It is mentioned, a story of an *A’rabī* (bedouin) was informed about the coming of Ramadhān, he said: “*I’m going to spend the entire month travelling!*” (i.e. to avoid fasting). He saw the month as something heavy and burdensome, as opposed to one who knows the great virtue of Ramadhān, he spends the entire month in the Masjid, to not miss out on any ‘*Ibādah* and that was the way of the Salaf – to spend their time in the *Masājīd*.

4. *Make up any missed fasts*

We should make up any obligatory fast from last year, remind ourselves and families, and especially the women (who may have missed fasts due to menstruation, or breastfeeding etc.).

5. Seek beneficial knowledge of the rulings of Ramadhān

6. Hasten towards taking care of affairs that will busy us before

Take care of anything that may busy you from the ‘*ibādah* (worship of Allāh), so that once Ramadhān enters, you can focus and dedicate all of your time to worship. In this, we see that some people save their holiday from work for the month of Ramadhān, or they go on holiday in the last 10 days of Ramadhān.

Doing ‘Umrah in the month of Ramadhān has a great virtue, you’ll get the reward of doing Hajj. So if you’re able to save some money to go and perform ‘Umrah then do so in shā Allāh.

7. Reminding family members and the people

Sit with them and teach them if one has the ability.

8. Teaching people the the rulings of Fasting

Especially if you’re the Imām of the Masjid because people’s hearts are receptive to you.

9. Fasting the Month of Sha’bān

And we have mentioned this already.

10. Recite the Qurān

“When [the month of] Sha’bān entered, ‘Amr ibn Qays رحمه الله used to close his store and devote his time to reading the Qur’ān.”⁶

⁶ *Latāif al-Ma’ārif*, pg. 196

11. Preparing a schedule/timetable for Ramadhān

Prepare a plan of what you plan to do from morning until night. It should be based on your capability. Do not compare yourself to anyone else, because if you do, then from day one you will weaken yourself and not be able to continue. Know your reality and your limits.

There are some people who I know personally who complete the recitation of the Qur'ān daily. They did not arrive to this habit except with years of practice and consistent recitation of the Qurān.

How can a person know how much he's able to do? *By preparing from now.* From now on start reading the Qurān, do acts of worship to see how much you're able to do. And plan your schedule based on that *in shā Allāh.*

نسأل الله العلى الأعلى أن يجعل هذا الاجتماع اجتماعا مرحوما ومن بعده تفرقا معصوما ولا يجعل منا ومن
بيننا شقيا ولا محروما وآخر دعوانا أن الحمد لله رب العالمين وصلى الله وسلم على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه
أجمعين .





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