

Faith



How to Prepare for Ramadan

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A lot of us yearn to prepare for Ramadan, but we have no idea how to start. Below are a few tips to insha'Allah help prepare our minds and hearts for this upcoming Month of Mercy.

1. Making the Intention

Simple to do and has a powerful impact. Maybe you want to prepare for Ramadan, but between school, work, family, and any other activities, you just have

no idea how to fit in 'Preparing for Ramadan' time. Instead of making 'preparing for Ramadan' something separate from your daily activities, MAKE your daily activities a means of preparation for Ramadan.

For example, perhaps your mom asked you to pick up your brother from school on the day you finally had time to read a few extra pages of Qur'an. Instead of feeling upset and feeling like you have lost a great preparation for Ramadan opportunity, make the intention that you are picking up your brother to please Allah

subhanahu wa ta'ala and prepare for Ramadan by obeying your mother, helping your family members, building ties of kinship... and the list continues.

The point is that preparing for Ramadan does not have to be some magnificent, enormous, extra-special thing that needs to be done at a certain time of the day. Many of your daily actions can be turned into Ramadan preparation actions with a sincere intention, insha'Allah.

2. Do these easy-to-reap-reward actions:

Asking Allah to forgive your brothers and sisters. "Whoever seeks forgiveness for believing men and believing woman, Allah will write for him a good deed for each believing man and believing woman." [at-Tabarani, classed as hasan by al-Albani]

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (r.a) said "The Messenger of Allah (sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: 'Whoever says subhanAllah wa bi hamdih (praise and glory be to Allah) 100 times, morning and evening, his sins will be erased even if they are like the foam on the sea.'" Narrated by al-Bukhari, 6042; Muslim 2691

If a person says "SubhanAllah" (glory be to Allah) 100 times, a thousand good deeds are recorded for him and a thousand bad deeds are wiped away. Narrated by Muslim 2073

Remember Allah when you go shopping: "Whoever enters a market and says: "Laa ilaha illallah wahdahu la shareeka lah, lahul mulku wa lahul hamdu yuhi wa yumeetu wa huwa hayyun laa yamoot, bi yadihil khair, wa huwa 'ala kulli shayin qadeer' [there is nothing worthy of worship except Allah, 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] Allah will write for him/her a million good deeds and erase a million bad deeds and raise him a million levels." [at-Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by al-

Albani]

3. Up your worship

To help condition your heart for this blessed month, intensify your worship before Ramadan begins. Just a small, consistent amount is enough. The Prophet, sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam told us:

"The deeds most loved by Allah are those done regularly, even if they are small."

For example, if I always pray 2 rakats of sunnah after ishaa, from this day until Ramadan begins- and even through Ramadan, let me make the intention that I will now pray 2 extra rakats of sunnah after ishaa. And every time I pray these extra 2 rakats, which are more than what I normally pray, let me remember that I am doing these with the intention of asking Allah to help me be prepared to strive and exert my utmost effort during Ramadan.

4. Make a dua list today

This is THE MONTH to ask for EVERYTHING, both related to this life and the Next. Let us not wait until the last 10 nights to make special duas, and then once Eid passes realize that we had completely forgotten about fifty other things we needed to make dua for. Let us start making our lists now, and add to it as more things come our way. Insha'Allah this should help us remember to make constant dua in this month where dua is accepted, and help our hearts pour out to the One Who can make those duas happen, subhanahu wa ta'ala.

5. Write out your objectives for Ramadan

Praying all of your fard prayers? Praying all of your sunnahs? Reading the entire Qur'an? Giving \$1 charity a day? Making itikaaf in the masjid? Leaving one serious sin that you've been trying to get away from for some time now? Sincerely turning completely back to Allah?

Write out a list, put them somewhere you will see them, and make dua for your success in fulfilling these objectives.

6. Make a plan!

Look at your objectives, and try

to make a plan on how to actualize those objectives in this month.

For example, perhaps you are really struggling to pray your sunnah prayers. In this month, realize the enormity of the ajr of praying the sunnah prayers... think that perhaps these sunnahs will be the deeds that will be so heavy on your scale of good deeds when you are intense need of them- on yowm al qiyamah. Therefore, fight to keep doing them all throughout Ramadan. If you can't pray your 2 rakats after dhur right away, make sure to do them as soon as you get a chance.

Thus, your plan might look something like this:

Objective: Pray all of my fard prayers.

Method: Envision myself on the day of judgment seeing the insha'Allah weight of praying my sunnah consistently during this month. Make sure to pray sunnah salah immediately after salah. If I cannot, do it as soon as the opportunity arises... don't let myself put it off!

Another example is that of finishing the Qur'an:

Objective: Finishing the entire Qur'an in this month.

Method: Read 4 pages of the Qur'an after every salah. 5 prayers X 4 pages = 20 pages. 20 pages = about 1 juz. 1 juz X 30 = the entire Qur'an.

So many Muslims have passed away since last month. So many people have not made it to Ramadan this year. Last year was their very last Ramadan. Will you make it to this Ramadan? Will this be your last Ramadan?

Aim to strive in this Ramadan. 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 Allah will help our hearts soften and honor us with making it easy to turn to Him and open up to Him.

May Allah make us of the successful in Ramadan, and make it easy for us to turn to Him completely and perpetually. Ameen

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