

RAMADAN

A Time For Revival Or Survival?



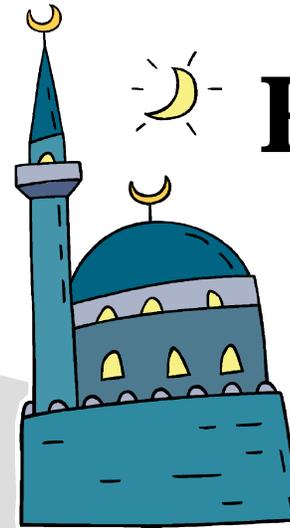
A Quick Checklist Of Ramadan:

- ❑ Make a resolve to win the maximum favour of Allah: perform extra voluntary prayers (*Nawaafil*), make frequent *Du'a* and increase remembrance (*Dhikr*).
- ❑ Try to recite some Quran after every Prayer. In fact if you read 3-4 pages after every Prayer you can easily finish the entire Quran in Ramadan! Study the Quranic *Tafseer* (commentary) every morning.
- ❑ Invite a person you are not very close with to your home for Iftar, at least once a week. You will notice the blessings in your relationships!
- ❑ Bring life to your family! Everyday, try to conclude the fast with your family and spend some quality time together to understand each other better.
- ❑ Give gifts on 'Eid to at least 5 people: 2 to your family members, 2 to your good friends, and 1 to a person whom you love purely for the sake of Allah.
- ❑ Commit to an Islamic study circles to enhance your Islamic knowledge and practice. Plan to complete reading a book on Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) life in these 30 days.
- ❑ Donate generously to the *masajid*, Islamic organizations, and any where people are in need. "This is a month of sharing!"
- ❑ Share Ramadan and its teachings of love & patience with your neighbours. Learn how at <http://www.soundvision.com/info/ramadan/>
- ❑ Initiate a project to promote or revive a 'forgotten' social cause in the Muslim and non-Muslim community: fight against racism, AIDS, drugs, cancer, smoking...etc.
- ❑ Did you know, our society, which constitutes only 20% of world's population, actually consumes 80% of world's resources! Volunteer at food bank or Anti-Poverty campaign, while fasting!
- ❑ Seek the rare and oft-neglected rewards of 'the night better than a 1000 months', *Laylatul-Qadr*.
- ❑ Weep in private for the forgiveness of your sins: It is the month of forgiveness and Allah's Mercy! It's never too late.
- ❑ Learn to control your tongue and lower your gaze. Remember the Prophet's warning that lying, backbiting, and a lustful gaze all violate the fast! Abandon foul language forever.
- ❑ Encourage others to enjoin and love goodness, and to abandon everything evil. Play the role of a *Da'ee* (one who invites to Allah) with passion and sympathy.
- ❑ Experience the joy of *Tahajjud* prayers late at night and devote yourself purely and fully to Allah in the *I'tikaf* retreat during the last 10 days of Ramadan.



For More Info

Islam: The Natural Way by Abdul Wahid Hamid
Inner Dimensions of Islamic Worship by Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali
Let Us Be Muslims by Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi



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As in years past, the beloved yet unexpected guest of millions, "Holy Ramadan" once again enters our lives. Muslims are filled with great joy in anticipation of welcoming him. Yet to one unaccustomed, it would almost seem as if Muslims had never met him before!

All of a sudden, our new-found love for this guest causes us to radically change our daily schedules and habits to entertain him. Our Mosques mysteriously overflow with worshippers, chapters of the Quran are heard chanted till the wee hours of the morning accompanied by a hail of cries, and our social gatherings and feasts become livelier than ever before - all these sacrifices made to honor this special and 'holy' guest from Allah.

Isn't it interesting and ironic that while he is among us, for a full 30 days, we starve, read numerous articles on do's and don'ts of treating this guest, avoid watching TV in his presence, and sing songs or *Nasheeds* of joy, yet we fail to understand him and the mission of his visit? For some odd reason, this same "Holy Ramadan" becomes a stranger to us on the 1st of *Shawwa!*

Let the Scrubbing Begin!

What many of us forget is that this guest accompanies a deep purpose and responsibility. It is as Muhammad al-Shareef notes:

"Whenever a guest comes to our home, we prepare in advance for his arrival by vacuuming the carpet, dusting the shelves, and scrubbing the sinks. We should do this for our guest of Ramadan as well. But the scrubbing should not just be of our physical surroundings, it should include the scrubbing of our sins!"



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Ever Wonder Why The 'Change' And 'Blessings' Don't Last?

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi explains in *Let Us Be Muslims*:

"The greatest mistake we commit is to regard the outward shape of acts of prayer and fasting as the real 'Ibadah (worship) and we suffer from the delusion that whoever just fulfills these requirements performs the 'Ibadah of Allah. Just as physical strength cannot be obtained from the bread until it is fully digested, the spiritual power cannot be obtained from fasting until the person allows Ramadan's purpose to permeate one's heart and mind and dominate one's thought, intention and deed."

Ramadan - A Tool Of Transformation And Month Of Sharing

In addition to the indispensable personal benefits of fasting, Ramadan is a time for social awareness. As Hammudah 'Abd al-Ati describes in *Islam in Focus*:

"No sociologist or historian can say that there has been at any period of history anything comparable to this powerful institution of Islam: Fasting in the month of Ramadan. People have been crying throughout the ages for acceptable belonging, for unity, for brotherhood, for equality, but how echoless their voices have been, and how very little success they have met."

No Time To Hibernate!

As Dr. Abdullah Hakim Quick eloquently explains in *Ramadan in History*:

"Ramadan is actually a time of increased activity wherein the believer, now lightened of the burdens of constant eating and drinking, should be more willing to strive and struggle for Allah. The Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) nine Ramadans were filled with decisive events, such as Jihad, and he left us a shining example of sacrifice and submission to Allah. Throughout Islamic history, most of the significant battles were won in this month!"

Living Taqwa - Moving Dead Hearts To Action!

Quran [2:183] describes attainment of Taqwa to be the real purpose of Fasting. But, what is Taqwa?

- Sayyid 'Umar ibn al-Khattab: "A person with the quality of Taqwa is like a person walking with caution on a thorny road. The way he would take care to save his clothes from getting entangled in the



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thorns, so is a person with Taqwa conscious of every action he does (for fear of falling into wrong)."

- Sayyid 'Ali ibn Abi Talib: "Taqwa means fearing Allah, acting in accordance with the Quran, contentment with whatever little you have, and preparing for the day of departure (death)."
- Imam al-Ghazali narrates: "Whoever fears something (in the creation of Allah) runs away from it, whereas whoever fears Allah runs to Him (out of love and obedience)!"

Let us all begin to live a life of Taqwa this Ramadan to avoid the 'thorns' that come our way in the form of worldly temptations in the media and society in general.

Intensifying Our Love And Study Of The Quran

It is said when you love someone, you would know every little thing he or she says, likes and dislikes. How can we claim to love Allah, yet know very little about His message and gift to us? Ramadan offers the rare opportunity for an intense reflection on the message of the Quran. It is the source of a constant revolution in the lives of millions of those who possess a living heart, as Allah says, *"Indeed in this (Quran) there is remembrance for those who have a living heart, listen attentively and are awake to taking heed."* [Qaaf: 37]

It is reported that Imam al-Zuhri would say about Ramadan, *"It is recitation of the Quran and feeding of people."* Similarly, 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) would recite from the pages of the Quran starting at the break of day at dawn in Ramadan until the sun had risen.

This Was The Spirit Of Ramadan

"This was the spirit of Ramadan that enabled our righteous forefathers to face seemingly impossible challenges. It was a time of intense activity, spending the day outside and the night in prayer while calling upon Allah for His forgiveness. Today, the Muslim world is faced with drought, military aggression, widespread corruption and tempting materialism. Surely we are in need of believers who can walk in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet (pbuh), the illustrious Sahabah, and leaders like Tariq ibn Ziyad, Salahuddin and the countless heroes of Islam. Surely we are in need of the Muslims whose fast is complete and not just a source of hunger and thirst. May Allah raise up a generation of Muslims who can carry Islam to all corners of the globe in a manner that befits our age."

a passionate reminder from Shaykh Abdullah Hakim Quick.