

Annoor Academy

Ramadan Newsletter



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Purifying Our Hearts in Ramadan

The Prophet Salallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam: said:

“Whoever fasts during Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Keeping this hadith in mind during this Ramadan will help us remember to do as many good deeds as we can. This month is an opportunity for us to purify our hearts through sincere worship of Allah SWT. So let's make sure that we take advantage of this opportunity and make the most of this month. Included in this newsletter are articles that focus on improving our Ramadan experience. Ramadan Mubarak to everyone!

Mariya Farooqi (Editor)

Emphasizing Charity in Ramadan

By: Aisha Patel

Allah SWT has created mankind alike and has brought us together in a brotherhood bonded by Islam. The behavior of Muslims living together in a community should resemble that of family members towards each other. When one person is in need of help, all others come to assist. And for this purpose, Allah SWT has given us two opportunities for giving charity to those in need: Zakah, the obligatory giving of a portion of ones wealth and Sadaqa, donating voluntarily. While both methods help to lessen inequality in our society, Zakah is also a way to purify ones wealth and fulfill the obligation set by Allah SWT and Sadaqa brings oneself closer to Allah SWT.

Though we all know that Zakah is a pillar of Islam and that the Qura'an often lists charity along with prayer, the act of giving charity is becoming less common in our society.

'Those who believe and lead a righteous life, and observe the salah and give zakah, they receive their recompense from their Lord; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve' (2:277).

Fasting helps us to realize the hunger felt by those who are underprivileged, and since we intend to gather as many rewards as we can in Ramadan, it is the perfect

time for us to show kindness and generosity towards others.

'The best charity is that given in the month of Ramadan' (Tirmithi)



Allah SWT is most gracious and generous and by multiplying the rewards for their good deeds, Allah SWT shows even more generosity towards his believing servants in the month of Ramadan.

'Allah accepts charity with His right hand and increases it in reward until it is the size of a mountain' (Bukhaari and Muslim).

Charity is not only given in the form of money but can also be in the form of ones time, knowledge, food, shelter and other forms of social welfare. Both the wealthy and the poor can give charity, as it can also be in the form of something as

simple as a friendly smile, a kind word or even preventing someone from performing evil. To encourage such habits, especially in the month of Ramadan, the Prophet SAW has told us that **'He who feeds a fasting person will gain the same reward as he will, without decreasing the reward of the person who is fasting' (Ahmad).**

The month of Ramadan comes with the opportunity of gaining maximum rewards as well as seeking forgiveness for our sins. It is narrated that the Prophet SAW said that charity extinguishes the sins just as water extinguishes fire.

Though many of the deeds we intend to perform in Ramadan require us to especially devote time from our schedules such as eating the meal of suhur and reciting the Qura'an, giving charity wont take much of our time. Donating is a simple yet incredibly rewarding act, which will bring us contentment in this life, and save us from the fire in the hereafter.

One last hadith to keep in mind this Ramadan when we want to give to those in need:

'Charity extinguishes the anger of the Lord and protects the giver of it from an evil end' (Tirmithi).

Walk the Talk

By: Saad Yousuf

This Ramadan lets focus not only on reading the Quran but understanding the meaning.



At large the Muslim Ummah reads the Quran in order to earn "brownie points." The whole idea behind our reciting of the Holy Quran is to earn ten hasanats per letter.

During the times of Prophet Muhammad SAWS the Sahabah (Companions of the Holy Prophet SAWS) used to recite the Quran to improve their lives and seek guidance from it. We as an Ummah have lost the true spirit of the Quran. We recite it and memorize it without understanding. If we do not understand the essence of the Quran then how can we act upon the teachings of the Quran?

We are entering the month of Ramadan; the month during which our copies of the Quran finally make their way out of the shelves and into our hands. We recite it with the intention of reading the entire Holy

Quran in the month of Ramadan without understanding anything that we have read. Somehow, unintentionally, we use it as any other book when really it is the Holy Book of Allah SWT and contains the words of Allah. Hazrat Akramah R.A. used to cry after reciting one verse from the Quran stating that: "This is the word of my Lord, Allah!"

Quran is the Zikr of Allah SWT, however it is also our main source of guidance. It teaches us how to strengthen our bonds with Allah SWT. And it teaches us how to become a better person, a better citizen, a better spouse, a better parent, a better son or daughter. It teaches us how to become someone who is the best in all walks of life. In other words, with the understanding of the Quran we can be a true believer whose words and actions don't defy

each other. After all, that is the true essence of the Quran.

The Quran calls itself "Guidance for mankind." I pray to Allah SWT, that he gives us true understanding of the Quran. And that he gives us strength to walk on the principles laid down by the Holy Quran. I pray to Allah, that we utilize this holy month of Ramadan to make the difference, which we want to see around us. And also to always live by example using the teachings of the Quran.

The Prophet SAWS said: "The Qur'an and its people who applied it, will be brought on the Day of Resurrection preceded with Surat Al-Baqarah and Surat Al-'Imran arguing on behalf of those who applied them." (Muslim)

Common Mistakes We Can Avoid This Ramadan

By: Mariya Farooqi

Take a moment and reflect back to last Ramadan and think about the things you did right and then think about the things you could have done better. Every Ramadan is a time for us to reflect and improve ourselves as much as we can. Think about last Ramadan and what you would want to improve on for this Ramadan. Take at least 3 things that you would like to do differently and try to implement those things. There are many common mistakes that are made during the month of Ramadan; things that we can try to avoid this time. A few of them will be described here:

1. Sleeping all day and staying up all night.

Yes, it is true that in Ramadan sleep is a form of ibadah because you are giving your body the rest it needs in order to stay active through out the day. However some people spend the entire day sleeping because they cannot bear the hunger. This is clearly not what it means to sleep for ibadah. Yes, it is good to rest and nap for a little while but to sleep most of the day away in attempts to make things easier for us is incorrect. We should make sure that we don't waste the day in sleep. Instead, we should dedicate a small portion of our day for a nap and for the rest of the day we should work on other acts of ibadah and good deeds.

2. Skipping suhoor/sehri.

We can all agree that waking up for suhoor and eating a meal is not an easy task to do. However, the blessings that we are missing when we skip suhoor are insurmountable. The Prophet SAWS himself used to have suhoor and

many times his companions would join him. The Prophet SAWS would say to them: "Eat suhoor for in suhoor there is blessing." (Bukhari, Muslim)



3. Missing the golden opportunity to have your dua'a accepted.

In the last few minutes before breaking our fast we should dedicate this time to make dua'a. Many of us get caught up with preparing and arranging food that we forget this important chance. The Prophet SAWS said: Three prayers are not rejected, the

prayer of a father, the prayer of a fasting person, and the prayer of a traveler. (Al-Bayhaqi)

4. Not controlling anger.

It is very important to always control our temper but it is especially important in the month of Ramadan. Losing our patience for just those few moments causes us to do sin. Controlling what we say to others and about others is something that defines us as human beings. It is Sunnah that if someone insults you to respond in a better way and simply say, "I am fasting." The Prophet SAWS said: "Fasting is a paradise so there should be no obscene or offensive talk or behavior. If a person fights him or insults him, let him say, 'I am fasting,' twice...(Bukhari, Muslim)

5. Forgetting about the spirituality of the month.

Some people fast in Ramadan from sunrise to sunset day after day and they don't focus on the spirituality of the month. They fast just because everyone else is fasting and forget about the importance behind fasting. Ramadan is a time to purify our souls and beg Allah SWT for forgiveness and ask him to save us from the Fire. It is a golden opportunity for us to take advantage of and yet sometimes all people can think about is not eating or drinking.

6. Focusing too much on food.

Often times in Ramadan the main focus becomes all about the food. Some people spend the entire day planning, cooking, and thinking about food. We do have to eat and feed others in Ramadan but when we dedicate all of our time and effort to this one thing then we will be too tired to pray or do anything else. Also, if we just focus on the food then we are missing the whole point of Ramadan which is to control our desires. If we stuff our stomachs with food as soon as iftaar comes around then this will make us too lazy to do anything else. The Prophet SAWS said: "The son of Adam does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach; for the son of Adam a few mouthfuls are sufficient to keep his back straight. If you must fill it, then one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for air." (Tirmidhi, Ibn Maajah. saheeh by al-Albaani).

7. Fasting but not giving up on bad deeds.

Some people fast in Ramadan and continue to commit evil acts such as lying, cheating, fighting, and gossiping. The whole point behind fasting is not to just stay away from food and drink. It is to completely avoid any bad deeds and fear Allah SWT because we are fasting for Him alone and He decides whether or not our fast is accepted. What is the point of fasting if you continue these bad deeds? Allah SWT says in the Qur'an: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may learn self-restraint." (Qur'an 2:183)



The Ramadan Experience

By: Manar Mohammad

Comparing Ramadan in a Muslim country vs. a non-Muslim country from a personal experience.

We all live in a nation where Islam is not the religion of the majority. Yet as Muslims living in America, we still maintain our religion and do what we have to do in order to follow Islam.

In Ramadan, those of us who are in school fast during the school year and those of us who work fast as we attend our jobs. And despite the fact that we see non-Muslims around us eating, drinking, and doing whatever they desire, we make sure that we do not give in. It's a true test from Allah SWT of our patience and of our control.

Ramadan overseas is much different. I myself have lived in Palestine for a few years so I was able to experience what it was like to spend Ramadan there and it was truly an amazing experience. You start your morning off with the sound of the Qur'an from the nearest mosque waking you up for suhoor and after a while the sound of the Adhan lets you know when to stop eating. After suhoor all of your neighbors head to the local mosque for Fajr prayer.

During the day, all of your friends at school are fasting too so you don't have to explain to people why you are not eating.

During the afternoon, as you walk down the streets of your neighborhood you can smell the sweet aroma of food from everyone's kitchen as they prepare for iftaar. And when the sun sets at the end of the day, everyone awaits the sound of the Adhan to announce the time to break the fast. The sunset is suddenly more beautiful. The Maghreb prayer is prayed together. And when it is time to eat, everyone is sitting around the table with their families saying dua'a and eating until they are full.

In Muslim nations, during Ramadan, you can see the shimmering lights and decorations from everyone's houses and windows. Neighborhoods hang lights, which stretch over the streets. Neighbors walk to prayers together and families stay up during the night and pray and chat until sunrise. There is some kind of beauty in the atmosphere, and it is as if everyone can sense when it is Ramadan.

Although I miss those days of Ramadan in Palestine I realize that one of the benefits of fasting in America is that we can teach

others about our religion. People always ask me during Ramadan why I'm not eating and I have the opportunity to teach them something about my faith, which in my perspective is a blessing from Allah. Back home everyone knows already what Ramadan is all about. But to my friends here it is something completely different and something interesting.

The Ramadan experience in a Muslim country is amazing for obvious reasons. However, in America we can have that same experience if we come together as a community. We should show our children that Ramadan is our holiday and keep special traditions that they can cherish and look forward to. Put up decorations, make special food, and show them that this is a holiday we should be proud of. Spending time with each other and helping each other in Ramadan will make this a wondrous month no matter what country you are living in.