

Becoming the Best Version of Ourselves in Ramadan: A Journey of Self-Improvement

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Ramadan is more than just fasting from dawn to sunset, it is a chance to reset, grow, and strengthen our connection with Allah.

This month encourages us to slow down from our daily routines, focus on our inner selves, and develop habits that bring lasting positive change. Whether it is through increased prayers, Qur'anic recitations, adhkār, acts of kindness, or moments of self-reflection, Ramadan provides a powerful opportunity to realign our hearts and minds with what truly matters. Allah said in the Qur'an:

Give your Zakat *HERE*

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ

The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong) (Sūrah Al- Baqarah, 2:185)

(<https://www.islamicity.org/quransearch/?q=2%3A185>)

At its core, Ramadan is about becoming a better version of ourselves. Fasting teaches self- discipline, patience, and gratitude, while charitable acts nurture a sense of empathy and compassion for those in need.

The spiritual and personal lessons we learn during this month go beyond its 29 or 30 days. They shape who we are long after it ends. As we embark on this journey, we are reminded that true self-improvement is not about perfection but about consistent efforts to be more mindful, kind, and connected to our faith.

Fasting for Taqwa and a Return to Allah

The Qur'an beautifully explains the essence of fasting:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may attain taqwa (God-consciousness)". (Sūrah Al-

Baqarah 2:183)

([https://www.islamicity.org/quransearch/?](https://www.islamicity.org/quransearch/?q=2%3A183)

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Ibn Kathīr, in his Tafsīr, explains that fasting nurtures taqwa by training us to control our desires and avoid sinful behavior. It is a means of self-discipline, helping us develop a heightened awareness of Allah and leading us back to Him in a state of purity and devotion. (Ibn Kathīr,1999)

Taqwa is not just a theoretical concept; it is a way of life. Ibn Kathir rh, wrote in his Tafsīr , when ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ra. asked Ubayy ibn Ka‘b ra. about taqwa, Ubayy gave a powerful analogy, saying:

“Have you ever walked on a path full of thorns?”

‘Umar replied, “Yes.”

Ubayy then asked, “What did you do?”

‘Umar said, “I lifted my garments and carefully avoided the thorns.”

Ubayy responded, “That is taqwa, being mindful of Allah, avoiding sins, and staying cautious in your path through life.” (Ibn Kathīr, 1999)

Taqwa is not merely about fearing Allah’s punishment, but also about striving for His pleasure. It is fearing the Almighty, acting upon revelation, being content with little, and preparing for the Day of Departure. It means living in a way that ensures Allah is pleased with us, longing for His mercy, and dreading His displeasure. It is a mindset that transforms how we think, speak, and act.

This Ramadan, let us embrace fasting as a tool to cultivate taqwa. Let us train ourselves to avoid what displeases Allah and to obey Him sincerely. Through fasting, we have the opportunity to strengthen our connection with Allah, purify our hearts, and prepare for the ultimate journey, our return to Him.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالتَّقَىٰ وَالعِفَافَ وَالعِغْنَىٰ "

“O Allah, I ask You for guidance, piety, chastity, and self-sufficiency” (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 2721*)

(<https://www.islamicity.org/hadith/search/?q=muslim%202721&sss=1>)

Fasting as a Tool for Self-Control

As human beings, we naturally experience anger at times, but true faith requires us to control our emotions and respond wisely. Islam teaches us to strike a balance between managing our anger and standing up for what is right. Fasting serves as a powerful tool in developing self-restraint and emotional discipline.

Fasting itself is a powerful means of self-control. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Fasting is a shield; so, when one of you is fasting, he should neither indulge in obscene language nor raise his voice in anger. If someone attacks him or insults him, let him say: “I am fasting!” (Sunan Abi Dawud 2363; authenticated by Al-Albani in Ṣaḥīḥ Abi Dawud).

Moreover, when faced with anger, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught us to seek refuge in Allah. He ﷺ said:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the accursed Shayṭān” (Sunan Abi Dawud 4780 (https://www.islamicity.org/hadith/search/?q=Sunan%20Abi%20Dawud%204780&sss=1); authenticated by Al-Albani in Ṣaḥīḥ Abi Dawud).

He ﷺ also provided a practical method to control anger:

“If one of you gets angry while standing, let him sit down. If the anger does not go away, let him lie down.”(Sunan Abi Dawud 4782; authenticated by Al-Albani in Ṣaḥīḥ Abi Dawud, Musnad Aḥmad 21391; graded ḥasan by Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūṭ).
(https://www.islamicity.org/hadith/search/?q=(Sunan%20Abi%20Dawud%204782&sss=1)

Fasting trains us to regulate our emotions, think before reacting, and make thoughtful decisions in challenging situations. It does not mean we should tolerate injustice, allow ourselves to be mistreated, or remain silent when witnessing actions that go against the commands of Allah. Rather, it teaches us to seek Allah’s guidance in responding appropriately.

By internalising these lessons, we develop greater patience, strengthen our self-discipline, and cultivate a deeper connection with Allah, not just during Ramadan, but throughout our lives.

Fasting is a Path to Inner Peace

Inner peace is not found through misguided meditation or external distractions; it is deeply rooted in our innate nature (fiṭrah). Just as our physical bodies require nourishment, our souls also need the right sustenance.

To truly attain peace, we must follow the way of the Prophet ﷺ in feeding our inner selves. Some people seek tranquility through music, sentimental melodies, or meditation practices that deviate from the teachings of Islam.

However, these are like consuming unhealthy or even impermissible (haram) food; while they may provide temporary satisfaction, they ultimately harm the soul rather than nourish it.

In these blessed days of Ramadan, take this opportunity to embrace the Sunnah. Recite the Qur'an, engage in tadabbur (deep reflection), and practice authentic adhkār, especially the morning and evening supplications found in reliable ḥadīth collections.

Do not say, "I am not an expert in ḥadīth," when authentic sources are readily available to us. For instance, Ḥisn al-Muslim serves as a quick contemporary reference for daily authentic adhkār, alongside al-Adhkār by Imām al-Nawawī.

Now is the time to shift from uncertain daily practices to firmly following the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. What greater blessing could there be than living by the Book of Allah and the best example of our beloved Prophet ﷺ—a perfect balance between this world and the Hereafter?

Psychological Well-being and Productivity

Ramadan teaches us to strengthen our endurance, not just physically, but also spiritually and psychologically. The experience of hunger, self-restraint, and life's challenges builds resilience, shaping us into stronger and more mindful individuals. A person who never faces hardship develops a weak character, while those who embrace challenges cultivate perseverance and inner strength.

Fasting reminds us of our dependence on Allah, encouraging patience, self-discipline, and trust in His wisdom. Being grateful to Allah and bearing patience is the key to a well-balanced life and mental well-being.

When we acknowledge Allah’s blessings, even in difficult times, we cultivate inner peace and contentment. Gratitude shifts our focus from what we lack to the countless favours of Allah, while patience helps us navigate hardships with a steadfast heart. Allah ﷻ reminds us in the Qur’an:

وَلَتَبْلُؤَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ.
وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

“And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient—those who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.” (Surat Al-Baqarah, 2:155-156)


(<https://www.islamicity.org/quransearch/?q=2%3A155-156>)

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

Strange are the ways of a believer for it is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has to feel delighted, he thanks (Allah), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it. (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 2999
(<https://www.islamicity.org/hadith/search/?q=Muslim%202999&sss=1>)

Modern research confirms the benefits of Ramadan on mental well-being. Studies show that fasting can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression while enhancing self-esteem and overall psychological health (O. Erdem, 2018).

The spiritual practices and sense of community foster gratitude, purpose, and motivation, ultimately boosting productivity (Jandali D, 2024). By allowing our bodies to rest and reset, fasting creates space for spiritual reflection and emotional healing.

 As we navigate Ramadan’s challenges with patience and faith, we emerge as more resilient, focused, and spiritually connected individuals. This holistic approach to self-discipline, gratitude, and endurance strengthens not only our mental well-being but also our relationship with Allah and our purpose in life.

Acts of Kindness and Community Development

Ramadan encourages us to be kind, forgiving, and generous. By helping others and sharing food, we cultivate compassion and moral strength, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility within our community.

The practice of infāq (spending in the way of Allah) during Ramadan ensures that the less fortunate are cared for, reminding us of our collective duty to uplift

society. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

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مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْتَبَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

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The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed of grain that sprouts seven ears; in every ear, there are a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills.

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(Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:261)

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The Prophet ﷺ also emphasized the importance of feeding others:

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“Whichever believer feeds a hungry believer, Allah will feed him from the fruits of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection.” (Al-Tirmidhī, 2449, deemed ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ by al-Tirmidhī)

(<https://www.islamicity.org/hadith/search/?q=Tirmidh%C4%AB%202449&sss=1>)

Whether we are fasting or feasting, coming together to prepare meals strengthens our bonds as Muslim brothers. As long as we do not waste food, adhere to Shari’ah, and remain focused on feeding and helping those in need, we should adopt the perspective of the bee, not the fly.

A bee-like mindset means focusing on goodness, seeking beneficial actions, and contributing positively to society. A fly-like mindset represents negativity, seeking faults, and focusing on what is harmful or unproductive. The Prophet ﷺ praised the bee, saying:

مثل المؤمن مثل النحلة، لا تأكل إلا طيبًا ولا تضع إلا طيبًا

"The example of a believer is like that of a bee: it eats what is pure and produces what is pure". (Musnad Aḥmad 3928, graded ṣaḥīḥ by Shu‘ayb al-Arna’ūt)

Additionally, Allah ﷻ warns us against wastefulness:

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful.” (Surah Al-Isra’, 17:27)

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During this blessed month, let us be mindful of our consumption, avoid extravagance, and focus on acts of charity and unity that bring us closer to Allah ﷻ and strengthen our communities. By embodying the qualities of a bee, seeking out goodness, benefiting others, and avoiding what is harmful, we can make Ramadan a time of true self-improvement and service to others.

Fasting allows us to feel a glimpse of the hardships faced by our brothers and sisters in Gaza, as well as around the world, though it is incomparable to what they endure daily. Their unwavering resilience, patience, and faith in the face of immense adversity remind us of the true essence of perseverance and trust in Allah. May our prayers and support always be with them, and may Allah grant them ease, victory, and justice.

Ramadan passes by so quickly, and before we know it, the blessed days are fading away. But it is never too late to pause, reflect, and make the most of what remains.

Every moment in this sacred month is an opportunity to turn back to Allah, seek His mercy, and renew our commitment to self-improvement. No matter where we are on our journey, we can always realign our intentions and embrace the blessings of Ramadan before it ends.

Let’s not just go through the motions of fasting. Instead, let’s:

- Open our hearts to the wisdom of the Qur’an and Sunnah.
- Strive to embody the beautiful qualities of self-control, patience, and empathy.
- Reach out to those in need with kindness and compassion.

- Forgive those who have wronged us and seek forgiveness from Allah, and those we have hurt.
- Fill our days with prayer, Qur'anic recitation, self-reflection, and remembrance of Allah.
- Search for Laylah al-Qadr, the Night of Decree, by increasing our worship and supplications in the last ten nights.

May this Ramadan cleanse our hearts, uplift our souls, and draw us closer to Allah. May our sins be forgiven, our faith strengthened, and our journey of self-improvement continues long after this blessed month ends.

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