Marital Bliss in Ramadan 8 Awesome Tips to Keep Your Love Alive

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*Last Ramadan, I looked forward to eating the fruit salad prepared by my husband’s hands for iftar. Even though the fruit pieces were not cut exactly the way I would have cut them myself, they were cut with love – and that’s what made my Ramadan extra special! Sitting together with him, my iftars with my husband were simple: just a date, some water, some fruit salad, and each other’s company. And that’s all we needed.*

Although married couples are not permitted to be intimate to the level which may lead to intercourse *while* fasting, there are many other ways to express your love for one another during Ramadan.

Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) says in the ayah:

“It has been made permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives [for sexual relations]. They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them. Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He accepted your repentance and forgave you. So now, have relations with them and seek that which Allah has decreed for you. And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the sunset. And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship in the mosques. These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not approach them. Thus does Allah make clear His ordinances to the people that they may become righteous.” [[Qur’an: Chapter 2, Verse 187](http://quran.com/2/187)]

Therefore, it is important to remember that while sexual activity during the day is strictly prohibited, after Maghrib and until the beginning of Fajr the next morning, resuming sexual relations with your husband is not forbidden. Although you may probably be tired from the long days of fasting and may be getting ready for taraweeh and qiyam-ul-layl during that period, it is worth knowing the boundaries and what is allowed for the month of Ramadan.

In this article, I will be sharing my tips and advice that will allow you to create time for your spouse, help you bond with your husband, and assist in strengthening your iman as a wife during the holy month of Ramadan. Striving for [a happy marriage](http://productivemuslim.com/happy-muslim-couples/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) even during the busy days of Ramadan will cement the foundations for a blessed marriage throughout the rest of the year, In sha Allah!

1) Make time for your spouse

You may be asking, how do I even find the time for myself during Ramadan, much less find the time to spend with my husband? Quite frankly, life can be a tornado during Ramadan, especially with young children, where everything is flying in a circle of mess right in front of our eyes. However, what often calms this tornado is [ample preparation](http://productivemuslim.com/the-ultimate-guide-to-prepare-for-ramadan-stress/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) and the thoughts of what really matters: our final destination, jannah. And how do we achieve jannah? One of the ways a woman will enter Paradise is by pleasing her husband, as the Prophet Muhammad ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

“Whichever woman dies while her husband is pleased with her, then she enters Paradise.” [[At-Tirmidhi](http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/12/16)]

Taking the above into consideration, it is no wonder that the thought of pleasing your husband refocuses your thoughts on the final destination of jannah. Creating time for your husband is a goal every wife should strive for, especially in the holy month of Ramadan, as rewards are innumerably multiplied. Make multiple intentions when you set out to please your husband: to increase your patience with his shortcomings, to control your anger, to be kinder; so you get multiple rewards for each of these intentions, In sha Allah.

2) Eat suhoor and iftar with your husband

One way in which you can spend time with your spouse is by eating suhoor and iftar with him, for this is a beautiful way to connect with one another during Ramadan. Furthermore, these times provide a great opportunity for each of you to discuss your progress in terms of your Ramadan goals and to remind each other that you are both fasting for the sake of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He). If your husband breaks his fast at the masjid, then try and set a time later in the evening for a light meal to compensate. Even if this is not manageable everyday, try and plan it for two or three evenings a week, and you can even get the children involved in these discussions. The aim is to have a stress-free and calm environment in which to [connect emotionally](http://productivemuslim.com/empathy-in-marriage/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) and enjoy each other’s company.

3) Have your husband help out

A great way to show someone you care for them is to help them out during their most stressful times; you will know this firsthand if you are a mother with young children! With that said, there are many ways in which husbands can assist their wives during Ramadan, such as loading the dishwasher, watching the children, or helping to prepare suhoor and iftar. Certainly, having a helping hand is very much appreciated and increases the love between a husband and wife because they are doing something together. Before Ramadan begins, have a healthy discussion with him and suggest tasks he can complete before or after work when fasting starts, reminding him of the great reward attached to helping others, especially during Ramadan.

4) Increase your knowledge as a couple

Another effective way for couples to increase their love for one another during Ramadan is to tune into Islamic lectures together about marriage in Islam, the rights of husbands and wives in Islam, and so forth. Listening to Islamic lectures or reading Islamic material from books can be done together any time throughout the day, and is a great way to not only gain knowledge, but to also spend quality time together. YouTube is an invaluable resource for short, imaan-boosting lectures, so you can ensure you have a few minutes together for precious reminders during Ramadan, which you can discuss later, especially during iftar.

5) Send each other ahadith

Whenever I read tips for healthy marriages, I often see advice about leaving cute “I love you” notes in his lunchbox or on his desk for him to find. During Ramadan, do this by sending each other text messages or e-mails. For instance, send him ahadith about jannah and tell him you are reminding him of the beauty that awaits you, to motivate you both to work hard in this dunya, so that you both may meet each other in jannah one day:

“Kauthar is a river in Paradise whose banks are of gold and its bed is of rubies and pearls. Its soil is more fragrant than musk, its water is sweeter than honey and whiter than snow.” [[Sunan Ibn Majah](http://sunnah.com/urn/1294370" \t "_blank)]

Receiving beautiful ahadith like this during Ramadan will remind you both of the beautiful gifts that you will receive for your sacrifices in this life, In sha Allah.

6) Encourage each other

Encourage each other to read the Qur’an daily, to memorize surahs and duas, and to pray on time during Ramadan. With every soft-spoken word of sincere encouragement comes plentiful reward. And with every word of encouragement exchanged, is a reminder of your love for one another, for only loved ones encourage each other to be the best they can be in this dunya in order to make it to jannah together!

7) Prepare yourself for his return from i’tikaf

If you’re like me, I’m sure you like to get dressed up for those fun Eid celebrations with family. This Ramadan, try and take some time out to glam yourself up a day early, just for your husband, if he has gone for i’tikaf. After 10 days of not seeing you and spending every moment in the worship of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He), your husband will appreciate that you made an effort just for him. Again, with the intention of pleasing Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) through pleasing your husband, this will ensure enormous reward for you, and guarantee a happy husband!

8) Make dua in secret

Ramadan has countless [opportunities for dua](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-4/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) to be accepted. So, for truly lasting happiness, make ample dua that Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) blesses your marriage and increases the love and understanding between you and your spouse2. Abu Dharr reported that Allah’s Messenger ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

“There is no believing servant who supplicates for his brother behind his back (in his absence) that the Angels do not say: The same be for you too.” [[Sahih Muslim](http://sunnah.com/muslim/48/119" \t "_blank)]1

*I know life can get busy, especially during Ramadan, but all of your sincere efforts towards keeping your marriage healthy and alive in Ramadan will be rewarded, In sha Allah. Remind yourself constantly of the reward attached to keeping each other happy, and build the foundations for a happier marriage this Ramadan!*

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Productivity in Ramadan…a Myth or Reality?

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When we started our Productive Ramadan project four years ago, we started with a hypothesis. The hypothesis said: ***“It is possible for a Modern Muslim man or woman to be spiritually, physically, and socially productive during Ramadan.”***

Up until that point, the debate about productivity during Ramadan was centered around two camps:

1. Those who brought examples from our past history showing how productive Muslims were during Ramadan but were not quite able to link and apply those past examples to our modern day challenges, and,
2. Those who completely gave up and used the shroud of “Ramadan is a month of worship” as a cover for their inability to be productive at work and in the community during Ramadan.

Our understanding was different. We believed that productivity is possible in the modern world and there are concepts in our religion and practical tips and techniques grounded in psychology and physiology that we could benefit from and apply during Ramadan to lead spiritually, physically, and socially productive lives.

But first let’s start off with a question:

Why is it important for you to be productive in Ramadan?

Simon Sinek, in his famous TED Talk, talks about the importance of starting any venture with “WHY” before you go into the how and what. By defining why, it becomes easier and easier to define the how and what. This is exactly where we’ll begin with today. We’ll first ask the question: “Why is it important for you to be productive during Ramadan?” The answer to this question is in the video below from last year’s productive Ramadan online course.

[**>>> Click here to learn more about the tools and training to be productive in Ramadan**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

Now that we’ve established the why. Let’s move on to the how and what.

In our [online course](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course), we teach a particular framework to help our students be productive during Ramadan. We explain that there are three types of productivity:

1. **Spiritual Productivity:** This is productivity that stems from practicing our deen and being close to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala). It’s about achieving Barakah in our lives and seeing Divine Goodness being attached to our time, wealth, health, family, children, work, and everything we have or do thus enabling us to be more productive.
2. **Physical Productivity:** This is productivity that comes from managing our minds and bodies and the physical aspects of our being. It’s about practicing certain tips and techniques and using our willpower and self-control to make the right choices for our mind and body in order to stay productive.
3. **Social Productivity:** This is productivity that derives from other people around us. It’s the productivity that comes from being part of a family, neighbourhood, community, Ummah and Humanity at large. It’s a selfless productivity that is often neglected but direly needed in today’s world.

What I’ll share with you below is some content that we used to have on our Productive Ramadan online course. However, we’ve updated the content and added more richness to it in the new course released this year. (If you’re interested, [you can find out more about the course here](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)). Having said that, the videos and information below should give you an abridged understanding of what we mean by productivity in Ramadan and how you can tap into it.

Let’s explore each of the three productivity spheres described above individually.

Spiritual Productivity

Under the concept of Spiritual Productivity, the key concept to understand is the concept of “Barakah”. How Barakah is linked to Productivity. Moreover, what’s also key to understand is how Ramadan being the month of Barakah is also the month of Productivity. The video below explains this in detail:

**Ramadan the Month of Barakah**

[**>>> Click here to discover productivity solutions that maximise the barakah of Ramadan, In sha Allah**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

Following on from the above, one of the common challenges people use for not being productive during Ramadan is Fasting, Praying Night Prayer (Taraweeh and/or Qiyam), Reading Quran, and performing i’tikaaf. Sadly, little do they know that these exact acts of worship are huge sources of Barakah and huge sources of Spiritual Productivity. The following four videos go into detail into these four challenges and explain how they are sources of barakah and productivity during Ramadan:

**1. Power of Fasting and Productivity**

[**>>> Learn more about Ramadan productivity solutions in the Productive Ramadan Online Course**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

**2. Power of Night Prayer and Productivity**

[**>>> Learn more about Ramadan productivity solutions in the Productive Ramadan Online Course**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

**3. Power of Quran and Productivity**

[**>>> Learn more about Ramadan productivity solutions in the Productive Ramadan Online Course**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

**4. Power of I’tikaaf and Productivity**

[**>>> Learn more about Ramadan productivity solutions in the Productive Ramadan Online Course**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

Understanding the above concepts and having a mindset that sees spirituality as a source of barakah and productivity is key to leading a productive life during Ramadan and beyond. Unfortunately, many of those who simply do not want to change their ways find it more comfortable to use religion/Ramadan as an excuse to not being productive during Ramadan, and I hope the above videos would help them to realise otherwise.

Physical Productivity

Mastering your mind and mastering your body, are two powerful skills that are needed to lead a successful life. These two skills are put to the test during Ramadan because your body is thrown off it’s usual food/sleep cycle and it is asked to adapt very quickly in order to survive the month. Moreover, your mind is tested with trying to focus with low energy and adapt to new behaviours during the month.

However, what if you didn’t see Ramadan as a testing ground and instead, you saw it as a training ground? A training ground for your mind and body to learn new skills and behaviours that would enable them to lead a successful life. How would that be?

**Mastering Your Mind**

In order to master your mind, you need to understand that your mind is like a software that can be updated/upgraded “if you put your mind to it!”. It doesn’t happen automatically. It requires direction and self-control. The next two videos explain to you how to direct your mind to change your behaviour and overcome laziness – two qualities you’ll definitely need during Ramadan:

**1. Change Your Behaviour**

[**>>> See how “Module 2: Productive Ramadan Thinking” of the Productive Ramadan Online Course can help you tackle root issues of unproductivity and develop productive behaviours**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

**2. Overcome Laziness**

[**>>> See how “Module 4: Physical Productivity” and “Module 6: Productivity at Work” of the Productive Ramadan Online Course can help you overcome laziness and procrastination**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

**Mastering Your Body**

Our bodies are the vessels for our souls. They are the machines that Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala) has blessed us with in order to fulfill His commands and gain His pleasure in this life and the hereafter. Once we have this understanding of the purpose of our bodies, the question then arises, how can we ensure optimal performance from these machines in order to fulfill Allah’s commands in the best way possible?

These machines (our bodies) need three things to perform optimally:

1. Sleep (Rest)
2. Food (Nutrition)
3. Fitness (Strength and Flexibility)

If we can optimize these three for our bodies, you’ll be amazed at what you can do. (And you don’t have to be an olympic athlete to reap the benefits of an optimally performing body. Anybody who invests in their body’s sleep, food, and fitness will gain positive results).

Of course Ramadan comes with its own set of challenges and affects our sleep, nutrition, and fitness. These challenges include:

1. Lack of sleep or disturbed sleep cycle due to night prayers (taraweeh/qiyam) and late night meals.
2. Lack of food due to sleep
3. Lack of fitness due to lack of time

So how do we overcome these challenges?

**Managing Sleep During Ramadan**

Couple of years back, I wrote a series of articles that explain how to manage sleep during Ramadan. I highly recommend for you to read them and apply the techniques during this Ramadan. (I do go into more depth about sleep during Ramadan in my Productive Ramadan Online Course and you can find out more details here.)

[Master Your Sleep This Ramadan: Part 1](http://productivemuslim.com/ramadan-series-master-your-sleep-this-ramadan-part-1/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)

[Master Your Sleep This Ramadan: Part 2](http://productivemuslim.com/ramadan-series-master-your-sleep-this-ramadan-part-2/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)

[**>>> See how “Module 4: Physical Productivity” of the Productive Ramadan Online Course can help you manage your sleep and overcome the challenging “night life” of Ramadan – iftar, isha, taraweeh, qiyam, suhoor – and sleep!**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

**Manage Nutrition and Fitness**

Nutrition and Fitness may seem like the last two concerns one should care about during Ramadan. However, personally I believe these are essential to having a Productive Ramadan. This video below explains why:

[**>>> See the various productivity solutions inside the Productive Ramadan Online Course’s “Module 4: Physical Productivity” that help you with productive meal planning and staying fit during Ramadan**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

[**>>> See the “Sisters Special: Productive Muslimah in Ramadan” on how to combat the “kitchen dilemma” and other Muslimah challenges during Ramadan**](https://www.kajabinext.com/marketplace/courses/1221-productiveramadan-online-course)

Social Productivity

So far we’ve covered individual aspects of productivity. Let’s turn our focus to what we can do beyond ourselves and how we can be productive with our families, neighbours, communities, and Ummah.

The video explains explains the meaning of social productivity and why we should care. It then talks about different ways to get involved in socially productive projects during Ramadan as well as how to balance your time between the different social productive activities in your life. I highly recommend you to watch this.

[Can’t se*e this video in your email? Click here to watch it.*](http://productivemuslim.com/productivity-in-ramadan-a-myth-or-reality)  
[*Watch this video on Vimeo.*](https://vimeo.com/98436838)

[**>>> See how “Module 5: Social Productivity” of the Productive Ramadan Online Course can help you transform your social events into a service for Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala)**](http://productiveramadan.com/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)

**Social Productivity Challenge**

Now that you’ve understand what I mean by social productivity, I have a challenge for you. Are you up for it? ;)

[Can’t se*e this video in your email? Click here to watch it.*](http://productivemuslim.com/productivity-in-ramadan-a-myth-or-reality)  
[*Watch this video on Vimeo.*](https://vimeo.com/98574947)

[**>>> Make the intention and take action for a Productive Ramadan!**](http://productiveramadan.com/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)

Conclusion

I hope this post convinced you that productivity during Ramadan is not a myth, but a reality. Yes, it does take effort to be productive during Ramadan, but it’s not impossible.

If you care about your productivity during Ramadan and don’t want to feel guilty that you’ve wasted your Ramadan, or want Ramadan to be a truly transformative experience for you, then I highly recommend that you join us and over 1,000 students from around the world on our[Productive Ramadan Online Course](http://productiveramadan.com/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking).

I don’t want to push you into buying the course or give empty promises. **I simply want to encourage you to visit**[**www.productiveramadan.com**](http://productiveramadan.com/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)**and decide if this is for you.** Read all the information there and what we’ll share with you. Then (and only then), if you’re comfortable with our course content and structure and if you feel that it will bring benefit to you, sign up for the course and begin your Productive Ramadan journey!

Moreover, as a personal guarantee from me, if you go through the course and you don’t like it, or you don’t find the information useful, I have a**30-day money back guarantee** for you. If for any reason the course does not meet your expectations, drop us an e-mail, and we’ll refund you immediately; no questions asked.

Productivity in Ramadan is a reality…are you ready to live it? Come and join us at [**www.productiveramadan.com**](http://productiveramadan.com/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)

*This article was first published on June 17, 2014.*

[Get FREE ProductiveMuslim Online Training Webinar: How to Master Your During Ramadan (& make the most of the blessed month)](http://app.webinarjam.net/register/13159/5575fd5195)

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Amp Up Your Ramadan: 7 Steps to Make This Your Most Productive Ramadan

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*Every year as Ramadan approaches, there are many online webinars, events, and local activities that all pertain to one thing:*[*preparing you for the best month*](http://productivemuslim.com/8-simple-steps-to-help-you-prepare-for-ramadan/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)*. I have always believed that****knowledge is not power;******knowledge is potential power****.*

*Because no matter how many lectures you listen to, and how many webinars you attend, if you are not willing to take that knowledge and implement it in your day-to-day life, then you are really not taking advantage of your resources and the knowledge that you have been blessed with.*

Of course, that would not be you, because you are one of the readers of ProductiveMuslim! The fact that you are here right now reading this is a clear indication that you are serious about your personal and spiritual growth, and I honor you for that. The fact that you are dedicating some of your time to read to become a better and more productive Muslim is definitely something honorable. May Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) always allow us to seek beneficial knowledge and help us implement what we learn.

As a personal development and high performance coach, I help thousands of people maximize their potential and become the best version of themselves. There is no better time than the holy month of Ramadan to do just that. [Ramadan is an amazing opportunity](http://productivemuslim.com/ramadan-series-utilise-the-precious-minutes-of-ramadan-effectively/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) for us to better ourselves, establish new effective habits, let go of ineffective ones, and set the tone for an awesome and productive year.

The tips and suggestions below have helped me over the years to really focus on the true meaning of Ramadan. My mission is to help you maximize your Ramadan so that you can truly reap its benefits.

Here are 7 simple yet effective steps you can follow to make this year’s Ramadan stand out from all the previous ones, In sha Allah.

1. Make the intention to make this your best Ramadan ever

Most of us are familiar with this hadith:

“The deeds are considered by the intentions, and a person will get the reward according to his intention.”  [[Bukhari](http://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/1/1)]

However, sometimes it is very easy to overlook this simple yet profound act of making the intention. I mean, with all our heart.**I really believe that the first step to having an amazing Ramadan is by taking**[**a sincere decision**](http://productivemuslim.com/productiveramadan-online-tips-episode-1/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)**to do our best in every single way.**

This is also true for everything we do in life. We have to first decide and make the intention to do something. Once we make the intention, Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) will help guide our steps, In sha Allah.3

2. Set clear goals

Last year, I was invited to conduct a Ramadan workshop for a mixed-age audience. When I asked what their Ramadan goals were, an energetic young woman raised her hand and remarked: “I want to be more organized this Ramadan.” Even though from the onset that sounds like a great goal, and in essence it is, however, it is not a clear goal.

**When you**[**set your Ramadan goals**](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-3/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)**, you want to be as specific as you can get.** For instance, instead of putting down on your list “get more organized”, you may want to say things like the following.

* Read 5 pages of Qur’an after each Salah.
* Prepare 15 freezable dishes to cut down cooking time.
* Take a rejuvenating power nap in the afternoon to be alert during taraweeh.

You get the drill, right?

**Now pause your reading, grab a large index card or piece of paper, and write down 5 specific goals to make this your best Ramadan ever.**

One of my specific goals last year was to read the Qur’an along with its meaning. I do not know about you, but for me, as someone whose native language is not [Arabic](http://productivemuslim.com/a-guide-to-learning-arabic/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking), knowing what I am reciting enhances my experience of reading the Qur’an cover-to-cover.

Remember to choose goals that you were not able to accomplish last year. So, if you always manage to pray taraweeh every single night with no worries, then do not put that down on your list. Choose new things. Remember, we want to amp it up this year.

3. Block the time to achieve your set goals

Now that you have set your very specific goals, you need to [make a daily schedule](http://productivemuslim.com/how-to-plan-a-schedule-for-the-month-of-ramadan/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) and make sure to block the time to achieve your goals. **Remember, only the things that get scheduled are the things that get done.** That is just how it works.

Therefore, simply recording your goals on a flash card or notebook will not enable you to get them done. You need to make the time for any activity in your schedule and actually write it down.

I encourage you to make a schedule of your entire day, with half-hour to one-hour blocks to do whatever you need to do on any given day. It may sound very rigid, but it really is not. On the contrary, *scheduling your day will free up your time because when you get things done in a timely fashion, you will have more free time to rest and rejuvenate yourself.*

4. Minimize distractions

Let’s face it, we live in a world of distractions. All our emails, texts, social-media notifications can distract us from what truly matters.

Now, I am not suggesting we give up all our gadgets. Not at all. But when we answer all the calls and notifications, in a way, we become slaves to our devices. On the other hand, if we choose to take charge, we [decide not to let them distract us](http://productivemuslim.com/consuming-electronic-media-in-moderation/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking). When we put them on silent or airplane mode, we use our phones and all kinds of electronics to their intended maximum potential. As a result, they become great tools to assist us in our daily tasks and can help us maximize our productivity.

There are some great apps that can help us [track our time](https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/now-then-lite-time-tracking/id907219276?mt=8), [memorize the Qur’an](https://itunes.apple.com/en/app/memorize-quran-for-kids-adults/id413035746?mt=8), or give us a [daily hadith](https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/daily-hadith/id311723176?mt=8) to ponder over. These are all great tools. However, we need to learn to use technology to serve us, instead of us becoming servants to it.

5. Plan ahead to simplify your life

Whether it is about[preparing your meals](http://productivemuslim.com/how-to-plan-a-ramadan-food-schedule/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) or gifts for Eid, planning ahead will save you much needed time.

* **Spend less time in the kitchen.**From samosas to grape leaves, everyone wants to make something yummy for their families, which can be great! However, if you and your family are spending a huge amount of time at the supermarket or in the kitchen preparing a feast every single day, you are really missing out on the true meaning of Ramadan. So, a little simplicity can go a long way.
* **Make a menu for the entire month.** Make sure to keep it healthy and simple. If you know you will have guests on certain nights, you can make those Iftars a little more elaborate if you choose to. Otherwise, think of easy-to-make soups, salads, and plenty of hydrating foods to break your fast.
* **Cook ahead.** It really does not take much for one to feel satisfied. Think of meals that taste great the next day so that way, you can cook enough for two days, hence saving your time and energy.
* **Prepare by freezing.** Many casseroles, pasta dishes, and other meals freeze wonderfully. This can save precious time that should be spent in worship rather than cooking.

The key is to remind yourself of the true meaning of Ramadan every single day to help you prioritize your activities.

As for [getting ready for Eid](http://productivemuslim.com/productiveramadan-online-tips-episode-28/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking), something that works really well for my family is to [get ready before Ramadan](http://productivemuslim.com/ramadan-series-earn-extra-rewards-even-before-ramadan-begins/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking). Yes, do all your Eid shopping before the moon is sighted.

Why spend any precious second shopping at the mall or browsing for hours online? Get all the gifts for your loved ones ahead of time, preferably wrapping them and hiding them. Now, if you are buying something really big and hard to hide, then you just have to be creative! Shopping ahead also includes those special Eid clothes. Make sure you get them ahead of time as well. Just make a list of everything and get it done.

Trust me, it is possible to be all ready before the month begins, if you are strategic about it.

6. Dedicate yourself to service

This one is huge!**It is all about using your talents, skills, and resources to make a difference in the lives of others,**which can be accomplished in many ways.

You can bake some goodies and deliver them to [your neighbors](http://productivemuslim.com/productive-neighbours-adding-some-water-when-making-broth/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) with a kind and caring note. [Action is the best form of da’wah](http://productivemuslim.com/dawah-series-2/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) to show how beautiful Islam is. You can visit the sick and elderly in the hospitals and nursing homes. You can cook some food for your local masjid for people to break their fast with.

The options are so abundant, all you have to do is be willing to make a difference and take action.

7. Make the Qur’an a top priority

I saved the best for the last! Having touched upon the idea of prioritizing our time in step 5, it is very important for us to keep the focus of the month of Ramadan on the Qur’an and remembrance of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He).

Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) tells us very clearly:

“The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur’an, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion.” [[Qur’an: Chapter 2, Verse 185](http://quran.com/2/185)]

We need to block the time to [recite and study the Qur’an](http://productivemuslim.com/ramadan-series-renew-your-resolve-quran-memorization-in-ramadan/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking). We need to ponder over its meaning. This is the month in which it was revealed. So, we really have to get serious about learning about the greatest miracle of our beautiful religion.  
*I wish you and your families an amazingly productive and meaningful Ramadan. In sha Allah, these tips will help you prepare to make this Ramadan your most productive one yet. If you have any of your own tips to be more productive in Ramadan, please share them in the comments!*

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[Aiming for an Awesome Ramadan Series – Part 1] It’s Time To Change Your Life

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*Ramadan can be one of the most dramatic, life-shifting 29 to 30 days of a Muslim’s life, if we know what to do with it. Throughout this five-part series, In sha Allah I will share with you many tips and techniques to make this your most awesome Ramadan ever! In today’s post, I hope to demonstrate to you that Ramadan is worth preparing for, as early as possible!*

Ramadan can be the most rewarding time of the year, if we know how to maximize it. Let’s do a little math to put the amount of blessings that are up for grabs in perspective. The Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said: *“Whosoever tries drawing nearer to Allah by performing any virtuous deed in this month, for him shall be such reward as if he had performed a farḍ (obligatory observance) in any other time of the year. And whoever performs a farḍ for h1im shall be the reward of seventy farḍ in any other time of the year” [*[*Ibn Khuzaymah & Bayhaqi*](http://www.ilmgate.org/research-on-the-hadith-of-ramadan-and-its-three-parts/)*].*

Imagine getting a multiple of 70 times the good deeds for doing something you normally do, for example a simple prayer like Maghrib. Now, combine that amazing fact with the following hadith: “…*Every good action is rewarded by ten times its kind, up to seven hundred times…” [[Muwatta Malik](http://sunnah.com/urn/406940" \t "_blank)].*

Depending on the level of your sincerity and khushu’, you can get a reward of up to 700 times for doing the same act [[Sahih al-Bukhari](http://www.sunnah.com/bukhari/2/34" \t "_blank)]. This, of course, has to do with the sincerity of the act. In Ramadan, this is much easier to achieve, since the devils (shayateen) are chained, as the Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said: *“When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained.” [[Sahih al-Bukhari](http://sunnah.com/bukhari/30/9" \t "_blank)]*

Combine those two multipliers with the following for maximum impact: The Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said: *“The prayer in congregation is twenty-five times more virtuous than the prayer of anyone of you on his own” [[Sunan Ibn Majah](http://sunnah.com/ibnmajah/4/53" \t "_blank)].*

So if you pray those 3 raka’ahs for Maghrib in jama’ah (which is very likely during Ramadan), they are worth 70 x 700 x 25 = **1,225,000! Over a million times more!** Look at the Mercy of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He)! Let’s work hard to get ready to reap the amazing rewards of this month!

The Hidden Blessings of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He), the Sublime, Cannot Be Quantified

There is another dynamic at play besides mathematics. It is a hidden gift from Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) that He gives preference to certain days, nights or months. Knowing that Ramadan, for example, has such amazing rewards associated with it encourages us to strive harder than ever during this month. Suddenly on the first day of Ramadan, we are able to do so much more than we have done all year.

This characteristic of our deen helps us realize during this month that **we have so much more potential than we may have thought**. Allow me to explain. Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) hangs the massive reward in front of us and we put in more work than ever before to achieve those blessings. This demonstrates to you and I (because Allah already knows) how much each one of us can truly accomplish! My dear readers, **Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) believes in us more than we do. The gift of Ramadan** **allows us to see it for ourselves.** He subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) shows us that we can change. Our behavior can be different in this month than it is all year. It does not hurt that He has chained the devils to give you that added boost either.

Ramadan Is Synonymous With Change

The first step to change, is to believe that we can change, and Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) makes that clear during this month. In fact, the word Ramadan comes from the root “Ramada”, which means intense heat. As a former engineer, I can tell you that intense heat can be used to bend and shape the strongest of metals. How is this related to Ramadan in our deen? **It is a time for us every year to reshape our lives into whatever shape we like7.** No matter how set you are in your bad habits, the heat of Ramadan can change you for the better, In sha Allah.

This is why Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) says in the Qur’an that the purpose of fasting is to achieve taqwa: *“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous” [*[*Qur’an: Chapter 2, Verse 183*](http://quran.com/2/183)*].*

If Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) gave us Ramadan so we can have taqwa, then what is the real definition of taqwa? Unfortunately, I’ve been to too many lectures or khutbahs (Friday sermons) where it has been mistranslated as God-consciousness. That is an effect of taqwa, but it is not the fundamental definition. The word comes from the root “waqa”, which means to shield or protect. The proper definition of taqwa is to protect yourself from displeasing Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He), by doing what He has commanded and avoiding what He has prohibited.

Fasting in Ramadan helps you reform your behavior to be in line with what Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) wants for you. It is no coincidence that Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) made Ramadan a month long. Psychologists, neuroscientists and personal development experts agree that the minimum time required to make (or break) a habit is between 21-28 days: About one lunar month. Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) has given us an annual free pass to create change in our lives. When you take a long-term perspective, you are able to build from one Ramadan to the next, striving each year to become better and better (more on this in a later article, In sha Allah).

Thus, we can understand when we hear that the companions of the Messenger of Allah ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) would prepare for Ramadan six months in advance and enjoy its effects six months thereafter. Their entire year revolved around Ramadan: First preparing to reap the maximum rewards and later enjoying the benefits of their hard work. In this series, I hope to help you shift your calendar to do the same, In sha Allah.

How Exactly Can We Do This?1

Every successful initiative, Ramadan or otherwise, has three important P’s:

* **Planning** – Written instructions and procedures to achieve the intended outcome. We will spend a lot of time describing how to do this properly.
* **Preparing** – Collecting all the materials and systems necessary to execute the plan. Later posts will have plenty of action steps and resources to help you prepare.
* **Practice** – Begin executing the plan during a period prior to the real thing. It seems unlikely this applies to Ramadan, but *“The Messenger of Allah did not fast in any month of the year more than he did in Shaban. He used to fast all of Shaban” [[Sunan an-Nisa’i](http://sunnah.com/nasai/22/91" \t "_blank)].*It’s like weightlifting: When you practice during Sha’ban and the other months, it is like lifting much heavier weight. But when Ramadan comes, the devils are chained and the burden is lightened, making it much easier to lift the same weight, and even increase your maximum capacity!

Starting this process as early as possible will give you ample time to plan, prepare and practice, so you can have the most awesome Ramadan ever!

Ideas for Goals This Ramadan

This Ramadan, make a commitment to your goals and targets for the month. Be careful, while Ramadan is about getting closer to Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) and reforming yourself, it is not time to be a monk (that is only in the last 10 nights!). **Instead, try to diversify your goal portfolio and create a launching pad for new habits that you can carry forward throughout the year.** Here are some ideas for areas to set goals for this Ramadan.

Prayers

* **Fard**: Five times a day, an absolute must! This is a great time to focus on Fajr prayer if you are having difficulties with it.
* **Sunnah**: Try to hit as many of the 12 sunnah raka’ahs in a day as possible.
* **Duha**: This pre-noon prayer is a great habit to develop this Ramadan.
* [**Taraweeh**](http://productivemuslim.com/ramadan-series-18-tips-to-enjoy-taraweehtahajjud/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking): Nothing more relevant in Ramadan than praying taraweeh! Just remember that the priority is to pray the Isha prayer in the masjid, even over taraweeh.
* **Witr**: The Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) never left this prayer, even when he was traveling. With the imam usually leading this prayer after taraweeh, it is a great way to begin to incorporate these prayers into your life!
* **Tahajjud**: In the last 10 nights, many offer the extra night prayers to try to catch laylat ul-qadr. This could be a great chance to begin incorporating tahajjud into your routine outside of Ramadan as well.
* **At the masjid**: This Ramadan, see if you can attend prayers at the masjid regularly, especially the fard prayers.
* **Nafl**: Do not limit yourself to the prayers I have mentioned above. Feel free to offer as many voluntary prayers as your heart desires!

Qur’an

* **Read it in your language**: The most important thing with the Qur’an is to understand it so you can feel the effect it can have on your heart. If that means reading it in your language, I advise you to prioritize this. It can help you understand what is being recited during taraweeh. But do not neglect learning Arabic so you can understand it in the language in which it was revealed.
* **Read it in Arabic**: Even if you cannot fully comprehend it, there are countless blessings in reading the Qur’an in Arabic, not to mention the reward. It may even inspire you to continue your studies of the Arabic language!
* **Listen to it in Arabic**: Everyone has his/her favorite reciter and this is the perfect month to try to listen to as much Qur’an as possible. Personally I try to do at least one khatmah (full reading) of the Qur’an just by listening in the car or at work, for example.
* **Memorization and/or review**: Many people study and memorize the Qur’an outside of Ramadan, but all will agree Ramadan is one of the best times for reviewing and memorizing more of the book of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He). Feel free to mix in this goal with the rest of your Qur’an goals.

‘Ibadah (Worship)

* **I’tikaf**: The Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) would go into the masjid and would not come out during the last 10 nights to maximize his productivity and ibadah. This is a unique act of worship that is not typically performed outside of Ramadan, so be sure to take advantage of it.
* **Dua**: When prescribing the fast for us in surah al-Baqarah, Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) mentioned a verse (186) that almost looks out of place (God forbid). While in the middle of describing the fast, Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) suddenly switches gears, saying *“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me – indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided”* [[Qur’an: Chapter 2, Verse 186](http://quran.com/2/186" \t "_blank)]. This shows the connection of dua to this blessed month. In a later article, I will be sharing the 8 duas you need to be making this Ramadan, In sha Allah.
* **Dhikr**: There are plenty of types of adhkar to be made, including those of the morning and evening, before bed and after rising, istighfar, tasbeeh, etc. The important thing is, you pick a goal and stick with it.
* **Tafakkur**: Spending time in tafakkur during i’tikaf might be a great way to hit two birds with one stone and spend some time pondering the overwhelming Might and Power of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He).
* **Da’wah**: Although Ramadan is not really a month of da’wah, it can be a great opportunity for those of us not living in Muslim-majority countries to explain this beautiful month and the traditions we practice.

Social

Ramadan is an undeniably social experience. From group iftars to group prayers in the masjid, every night you are seeing people. Use this as a time to connect with your family over iftar so they feel the blessings of Ramadan. Try to reach out to old friends as well.

Physical

I got the help of my wife, a [nutrition and fitness](http://www.trailblazeruprising.com/ruby) expert, to write this section:

* **Hydration**: The number one challenge in Ramadan during summer is that long days do not allow for enough time to get hydrated. Many people mistakenly focus on the feeling of hunger so they binge eat without realizing they are actually thirsty. Set a target amount of water to drink every day, and carry a water bottle of known amount with you everywhere you go to make sure you drink at least that much during the non-fasting hours.
* **Rest**: Long fasts can really drain you, especially if you are dehydrated. Therefore, you should set targets for the amount of rest you get each day and night. Perhaps you should plan to [take naps](http://productivemuslim.com/ramadan-series-master-your-sleep-this-ramadan-part-2/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking), or adjust your schedule to accommodate a different sleeping pattern.
* **Diet**: The types of foods you eat will have a dramatic impact on the amount of long term energy you have throughout the day and night. Do not overdo it during iftar as it will  make you feel less energetic and more bloated.
* **Supplementation**: It is challenging enough without Ramadan to get all the nutrients our bodies need. Consider taking supplements and vitamins to help bridge the gap, after checking with your doctor if necessary. I have also recently picked up juicing. It is an efficient way to get lots of nutrients in a short amount of time. It also gives a lot of energy! I highly recommend it!
* **Fitness**: Some say Ramadan is a time to maintain or expect losses in the fitness department. Many actually gain weight during Ramadan because of all the night-time binge eating. But real fitness experts like [Rehan Jalali](http://productivemuslim.com/the-ramadan-nutrition-and-workout-plan-for-success-part-i/" \l "utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking" \t "_blank" \o "[Ramadan Series] The Ramadan Nutrition and Workout Plan for Success Part I | Productive Muslim) actually say that Ramadan is the time to make massive gains! What fitness goals do you have this Ramadan?

Fasting

Believe it or not, you can have goals even for the type of fasting you are doing. Imam al-Ghazali raḥimahullāh (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said there are three levels of fasting. Which one are you targeting this year? Don’t worry, you can always build on that for next year, In sha Allah!

1. **Level 1**: Fasting from food, drink, and sex during the daylight hours.
2. **Level 2**: Fasting from performing evil actions and deeds.
3. **Level 3**: Fasting from having evil thoughts.

Finances

* **Sadaqah**: *“The Prophet**was the most generous of all the people, and he used to become more generous in Ramadan…[he] used to be more generous than the fast wind” [[Sahih al-Bukhari](http://sunnah.com/bukhari/61/63" \t "_blank)].*
* **Sponsor iftars**: A great way to reap the rewards of someone else’s hard work is to feed the one who fasted. Do you have a target for the number of iftars you would like to host in your home? What about sponsoring iftars at the local masjid?
* **Zakat al maal**: Many people use Ramadan as a time to remember to give their zakat al maal. Certainly this will be a goal that requires preparation and planning!
* **Zakat al fitr**: Everyone must pay this zakat in one way or another, so make the intention from now and be sure to pay it as early as possible.
* **Umrah**: What a wonderful goal, praying taraweeh at the Ka’bah and performing umrah at the same time! I have not had the honor of doing this during Ramadan before, but I pray I can one of these days, In sha Allah.

Akhlaq (Character)

Last but not least, Ramadan is a great time to review your character and see which areas could use improvement. You could set goals for certain character traits like truthfulness, humility, kindness, patience, modesty, trustworthiness, mercy, or something else I did not list. You could also set goals for controlling your anger or even visiting the sick.

Action Steps

1. Write out your intention statement to put in the work necessary to have your most awesome Rama1dan ever!
2. Schedule 30 minutes with yourself to think about these goal areas and create your list of at least 15 goals. The next article will show you what to do with it.
3. Share this article with friends and family and begin a discussion with them about your goals for this Ramadan.

*How do you feel about Ramadan now that you will be starting it well-prepared? Confident? Challenged? Please do share your expectations for this Ramadan below!*

*Read the other parts of this series:*[*Part 2*](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-2/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)*|*[*Part 3*](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-3/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)*|*[*Part 4*](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-4/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)*|*[*Part 5*](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-5/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)

**This article was first published on May 27, 2014**

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[Aiming for an Awesome Ramadan Series – Part 2] Did You Set Your Goals Right?

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*Goal-setting sounds like something simple and intuitive, yet many people fail to achieve the goals they set for themselves simply because they do not set their goals properly. It is sad to say that many people were never actually taught how to set goals properly. Their goals are more like wishes than tangible goals they can work toward.*

*In*[*Part 1*](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-1/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)*, we created our own list of goals to focus on achieving this Ramadan. Today, I will go on to share the 4 P’s to properly document your goals and my RAMADAN framework to help you design them, In sha Allah.*

The 4 P’s of Goal Documentation

It is surprising, but the way you document your goals can have a dramatic effect on the likelihood of your success in achieving them. Some do not bother with documentation and instead opt to rely on their memory.

The truth is, the very fact that you have written your goals down, can dramatically improve your chances of achieving them, according to [this study](http://cdn5.sidsavara.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/researchsummary2.pdf). But writing those goals is not enough; you must make sure to document them *correctly.* Since you are taking the time and putting in the effort to write them down, you might as well do it right! Here are 4 P’s that will help you make sure you document your goals correctly.

1. **Positive:** Lots of people want to eliminate something negative from their lives. It could be a bad habit like smoking, poor spending habits, eating behaviors, etc. So their goal is to stop doing something negative. Instead of focusing on what you do not want, or what you want to change, focus on what you *do* want. Your mind automatically attracts what you focus on. If the target of your goal is something negative, you will continue to attract it! This explains why so many just cannot seem to eliminate their bad habits. So for example, do not say “lose 20 lbs.” Rather, say “weigh 175 lbs.” Instead of saying “do not fail to complete the Qur’an again”, say “complete the Qur’an”.
2. **Person:** The trick here is to write your goals out as a sentence and make yourself the subject of that sentence. In other words, write the goal as a sentence in the first person. This forces your mind to associate your identity with your goals, which leads to the subconscious mind calculating the many ways to make this happen. For example, do not compile a list of goals like “weigh 175 lbs”. Instead, say “I want to weigh 175 lbs”. Instead of “Complete the Qur’an”, say “I want to complete the Qur’an”.
3. **Present Tense:** Many people put off their goals to some time in the future. For example, in Ramadan they say “I want to read the entire Qur’an.” Instead of that wishful thinking, fast-forward your life to that point in time when you feel the sensation of having completed the Qur’an and making sincere dua to Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) in gratitude upon completion. Feel the gratitude to Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) in your heart for the tawfiq (aid and success) to reach this goal. Feel the happiness and fulfillment for finally reaching this monumental goal. When you truly feel the sensations and emotions attached with achieving your goal, tie the words on the page to those feelings. This attaches your goals to something pleasurable instead of something painful. In practical terms, it becomes “I am grateful that I have completed the Qur’an”.
4. **Picture:** Once you have the words and the feeling, you need to attach them to a picture since the mind does not think in words; it thinks in pictures. This makes the goal more concrete and completes the connection between your entire mind and the goal. So if your goal is weight loss, for example, imagine the scale reading 175.0 lbs and the feelings that come with it. If it’s Qur’an, imagine looking at the last page and closing it for the last time (in this reading).

The RAMADAN Goal-Setting Framework

Knowing how to properly document your goals is one thing, but knowing what types of goals to set is something completely different! To make this as easy and as simple as possible, I have created a framework to help us formulate the goals that we are targeting. It is fitting that since Ramadan is all about transforming our behavior, that the proper method for setting our goals comes from the word RAMADAN. Your goals **must** meet these criteria to have the maximum possible impact.

**R for Relevant:** When setting goals for Ramadan, remember this is the month of getting close to Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) by ibadah, Qur’an, etc. Do not go out of your way to set 20 goals about da’wah. Even the scholars used to close their books of fiqh and hadith during the month of Ramadan and focus exclusively on the Book of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He). In the same way, make sure the goals you set for yourself this Ramadan are relevant to the month of Ramadan.

Another consideration is the goal must be relevant to YOU. Is this something you genuinely want or is it something being forced upon you? Is your wife hinting that you should lose 10 lbs this Ramadan? **Do not agree to it, unless it is something you genuinely want to achieve from the bottom of your heart.** Otherwise, you simply will not be successful. And I do not want you to start off in a losing battle!

**A for Aspirational:** In my corporate training and consulting experience, I commonly hear the expression and acronym “SMART goals” when companies and organizations are trying to create their strategic plans. It is that acronym that forced me to create the RAMADAN goals framework. The A in SMART stands for “achievable”. I don’t believe in setting achievable goals and neither should you!

The point of Ramadan is to expand your capacity and step outside your comfort zone, to aspire to something greater! **When setting your goals this Ramadan, pick something that makes you a little nervous.** Never prayed taraweeh every day in Ramadan? I challenge you to do it this year! As we discussed last time, Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) has given you a chance to show your potential and has made it so much easier for you by chaining the devils.

This is a chance to set a new standard for yourself and build new habits. Maybe after Ramadan you will continue going to the masjid for Isha throughout the year. Even the Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) used to [tighten his waist belt](http://sunnah.com/bukhari/32/11) (i.e. work hard) with the start of the [last ten days](http://productivemuslim.com/laylatul-qadr-worship-plan-to-maximise-the-last-10-nights-of-ramadan/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking), meaning he would go over and above what was normal for him to do during the rest of the month. If even he could do more, so can we!

**M for Measurable:** As an engineer, I know all about metrics and they truly do help us improve. By phrasing your goal as something that is quantifiable and measurable, it creates clarity whether or not you have succeeded in achieving your goal. So instead of saying you want to read more Qur’an, how much do you plan on reading? If your goal is to read the whole book in the month once, that is one juz’ or roughly 20 pages per day. Can you divide this into 10 pages before work and 10 pages after? Or maybe 5 before work, 5 during lunch break, and 10 after? **Putting numbers on it makes it real, and helps you come up with a plan for how to begin achieving these goals.** We will go into this in greater detail in the next article, In sha Allah.

**A for Assess:** You need to have a system to keep track of how you are doing with your goals from day to day. This assessment goes hand-in-hand with redefining your goals as measurable. The process of reviewing a system to assess your performance is called muhasabah, or holding yourself accountable. Omar raḍyAllāhu 'anhu (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: *“Bring yourself to account before you are taken to account and weigh your deeds before your deeds are weighed”*[[Ibnul-Qayyim, Ighathat al-lahfan](http://salaf-us-saalih.com/2013/07/02/bringing-yourself-to-account-before-you-are-taken-to-account-weigh-your-deeds-before-your-deeds-are-weighed/" \t "_blank)].1

I believe every Muslim should have his own system to keep track of his deeds on a daily basis. For example, I have created a spreadsheet in Excel I use to track certain daily behaviors like prayers, sunnahs, exercise, sleep, etc. Alternatively, it could be as simple as [a special journal](http://productivemuslim.com/develop-a-productive-habit-journal-writing/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) you keep next to your bed. **Every night before sleeping, you should review your actions of the day and see what corrections you need to make for tomorrow.** Then, using that information, every week you should review your progress toward your goals and determine what corrections need to be made for this week. We will discuss this more in the next article, In sha Allah.

**D for Definite:** When setting goals, you need a clear, unambiguous target. Just like making the goal measurable helps give you a criterion for success, making your goal definite will do the same. “I need to be a better person this Ramadan” just will not work. Be specific. How will you improve? With your parents? With your neighbors? With your salah? Maybe you will be more truthful? How will you know you succeeded? Will a third party be able to verify if you have succeeded? If not, keep trying to make it more definite so anyone else can determine if you have been successful or not.

**A for Appointment/Agenda:** Having 100 goals is great, but if you do not set the time aside to complete them, they will never be accomplished. That is why you need to set an appointment with yourself in your agenda or your calendar. Let’s go back to the Qur’an example. If you set the goal to read 20 pages a day, how long does it take for you to read a page? If it takes several minutes since Arabic is not your native language, you need to plan accordingly. That might mean it will take you one hour or more every day to read Qur’an. When will you make the time to do that? It may interfere with your other goal of being more charitable and volunteering in the neighborhood soup kitchen. Which of these two noble efforts will get that precious hour of your time? You need to make that decision in advance so you do not feel bad for doing one or the other.

There is also a practical benefit to putting it in your calendar: You can set up automatic reminders on your computer and smart phone. If you prefer a paper solution, you can print out your daily agenda and review it the night before to ensure each appointment gets its due preparation.

**N for Novelty:**For many years, we set the same goals over and over. “This Ramadan, I want to read the whole Qur’an”, we say, yet sadly we never do. This creates a lot of pressure on you, year after year, and can set you into a downward spiral. You start to believe you can never succeed at this goal, or any goal for that matter.

This Ramadan, try focusing on something new. Maybe do more [dhikr](http://productivemuslim.com/prezi-make-dhikr-your-friend/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)and focus less on racing to the last page of the Qur’an. Do not ignore it, but recite it with concentration and pondering as you go along, rather than obsessing over completing it this time. Then when you have achieved your new goals, you will build confidence and momentum that you can bring to your old goals at another date.

Also, make sure to set a goal that is a newer higher standard of excellence for you. If you pray five times a day right now, do not make that your goal for Ramadan! Do something new and exciting! But if you are currently not praying five times per day, you can try increase your target to five times a day this Ramadan.

Action Steps:

Take the list of goals you created last time and refine them [using this worksheet](http://cdn.productivemuslim.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ProductiveMuslim-Did-You-Set-Your-Goals-Right-for-Ramadan-Worksheet.pdf), ensuring you are using the 4 P’s and the RAMADAN framework. From there, narrow them down to the top 5-10 goals that you will absolutely achieve this Ramadan, In sha Allah. Do not worry; the next article will explain how to do that exactly!

*Is setting goals for Ramadan something new to you? How did it feel to write down those goals and filter them according to the 4 P’s and RAMADAN framework? I’m interested in hearing your thoughts!*

*Read the other parts of this series:*[*Part 1*](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-1/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)*|*[*Part 3*](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-3/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)*|*[*Part 4*](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-4/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)*|*[*Part 5*](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-5/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)

**This post was originally published on Jun 2, 2014**

Get FREE Online Training Webinar: How to Sleep Better During Ramadan (& make the most of the blessed month)

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[Reader Discussion] The One Thing You Want to Achieve This Ramadan

[< Previous](http://productivemuslim.com/10-tips-for-maintaining-your-health-after-ramadan/) | [Next >](http://productivemuslim.com/make-up-your-missed-fasts/)

[Zaynab Chinoy](http://productivemuslim.com/author/zaynab/) April 25 [Ramadan & Productivity](http://productivemuslim.com/category/topics/ramadan-productivity/) [38 Comments](http://productivemuslim.com/achieve-this-ramadan/#comments) [GET ARTICLES BY EMAIL](http://productivemuslim.com/newsletter/)



*Every month, we host a ProductiveMuslim reader discussion where you can share ideas and tips to help each other become more productive. Last month, readers shared many interesting ideas on*[***achieving your goals against all odds.***](http://productivemuslim.com/reader-discussion-achieve-goals/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)

The theme for this month’s discussion is **the one thing you want to achieve this Ramadan,** inshaAllah.

Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) blesses us with the special season of Ramadan every year: it is unlike any other season because it lasts for just one month and the entire world experiences it at the same time. Just like summer, winter, spring and autumn bring with them their different beautiful colors and harvests; this season comes to rejuvenate the entire world spiritually and ends with a global harvest of positive personal change.

[Ramadan is a *season* of change](http://productivemuslim.com/ramadan-catalyst-for-change/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) because just like in other seasons, there are actual physical alterations that take place during this month:the gates of heaven are open, the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained. [[Bukhari](http://sunnah.com/bukhari/30/9)] *The spiritual environment of the entire planet is altered to foster and*[*yield immense spiritual and personal growth*](http://productivemuslim.com/productive-ramadan-to-do-list/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)*!*

**The rule though, is that at the end of this season, we will only reap what we have sown and taken care of during its thirty days.** How many seasons of Ramadan have come and gone in your life, and what have you reaped at their end?

This year’s Ramadan is just over a month away and you’ve got to [choose your seeds (goals) now](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-2/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) and plan how you’ll be nurturing them throughout Ramadan, inshaAllah. *Begin today by asking yourself: what is the one thing I want to achieve this Ramadan, inshaAllah?1*

**Share with other readers:**

* your most important goal for this Ramadan
* how you plan to [work on your goal consistently throughout the month](http://productivemuslim.com/awesome-ramadan-series-part-3/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) inshaAllah
* what you’re doing right now to prepare for Ramadan
* your personal tips to meet Ramadan targets

*Feel free to share inspiring stories of positive change and growth you’ve achieved in previous Ramadans too!*

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**10 great goals to set for this Ramadan**



[**Samana Siddiqui**](http://www.soundvision.com/authors/samana-siddiqui)

1. Eat, drink and be moderate

Almost all of us do it - once Iftar time hits, we just keep plowing food and drink into our mouths till it's hard to move afterwards. And those of us who do it know this is totally contrary to the spirit of Ramadan, through which we're supposed to learn self-control not self-indulgence. Let's try to stick to the Prophetic rule on eating: fill our stomachs with one-third food, one-third water and one-third breathing space, even in Ramadan.

2. Give a dollar a day in charity...or five or ten

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always generous but even more so in Ramadan. Let's open our hearts and dig a little deeper in our wallets this year. Even less than a dollar a day adds up. Whatever you can give, it's the intention that counts.

3. Memorize 4 new Surahs

Memorizing the Quran often seems like a daunting task. But the key is doing it in small bites. Since there are four weeks in Ramadan, try to memorize one new Surah a week. Start off with a short, easy one. Once you've started, you'll build momentum and may even want to memorize a longer one the following week.

4. Go to Tarawih prayers

Post-Iftar, the first urge is to sleep after an exhausting day. But try your best to head out to the mosque for Tarawih prayers. Praying alone is wonderful, but doing it in congregation is fantastic. The community spirit is part of Ramadan's blessings. Don't miss it this year. If going every day is not possible, try going at least one week.

5. Attend the Tarawih prayer in which the recitation of the Quran will be finished

Call the local mosque and find out which day the Imam will be finishing the recitation of the Quran in prayer. Attend to not only hear part of the Quran's recitation in prayer, but also participate in the heart-rending Duas that follow it.

6. Stop swearing and/or backbiting – with a special box

It's hard not to shoot our mouths off when someone's upset us. Whether we utter those four-letter words or backbite about someone to our family and friends, we know this isn't the God-approved way of letting off steam. In Ramadan, when we want to build our spirituality, we've got to wage Jihad against our bad habits.

Try this: get a box and every time you catch yourself swearing or backbiting put some money in it. It could be a buck or less. The point is to choose an amount that makes it feel like punishment.

At the end of the month send the money to a charity or buy a gift for the person whom you've backbitten the most against.

7. Call/email your relatives

You'd think that given the easy access to email, competitive long-distance calling rates, phone cards, etc. these days, we'd keep in touch with family and friends more often. But the opposite seems to be the case, as we get caught up in life's "busyness."

Strengthening ties with family members and keeping in touch with friends is part of our way of life and an act Allah is very pleased with. This Ramadan, call family and friends or at least email them a Ramadan card and ask them how their fasting is going.

8. Go on a technology diet

Even if you work in the IT industry, you can do this. Avoid checking personal email and surfing the web during your fast. After Iftar, instead of plopping yourself in front of the screen, go to Tarawih. The same goes for the television. The point is to try to give our full attention to spiritual elevation this month.

9. Read 5 minutes of Quran a day...just five, not more, not less

Even if you feel you've got absolutely no time, set a timer or the alarm on your cell phone and find a relatively quiet place. You can read the first page of the Quran you open or follow a sequence. The choice is yours. The point is simply to connect with God through His revelation in the month of the Quran.

10. Forgive everyone who has hurt you

Still got a festering wound from the fight with your friend last year? Still upset about something your spouse said during a heated argument? Or are you still bitter about the way your parents sometimes treated you as a kid? Let go of the anger and pain this Ramadan and forgive those who have hurt you. Forgiving someone is not only good for the body, but it's also great for the soul. And in Ramadan, ten days of which are devoted to Allah's forgiveness, shouldn't we lesser beings forgive too?

If you find it very difficult to forgive everyone, forgive at least three people.  
  
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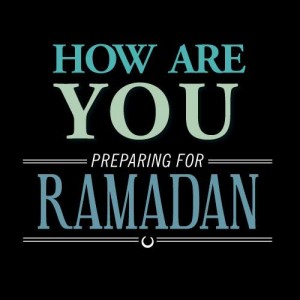
http://www.soundvision.com/article/10-great-goals-to-set-for-this-ramadan

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SEVEN WAYS TO PREPARE FOR RAMADAN

posted by [relkhatib](http://www.irusa.org/author/relkhatib/" \o "relkhatib), 21st June 2013, Categories: [Blog](http://www.irusa.org/category/blog/)Tags: [fasting](http://www.irusa.org/tag/fasting/), [food](http://www.irusa.org/tag/food/), [hadith](http://www.irusa.org/tag/hadith/), [hunger](http://www.irusa.org/tag/hunger/), [IRUSA](http://www.irusa.org/tag/irusa/), [islam](http://www.irusa.org/tag/islam/), [Islamic Relief USA](http://www.irusa.org/tag/islamic-relief-usa/), [Muslim](http://www.irusa.org/tag/muslim/), [Quran](http://www.irusa.org/tag/quran/), [Ramadan](http://www.irusa.org/tag/ramadan/), [religion](http://www.irusa.org/tag/religion/), [religious observance](http://www.irusa.org/tag/religious-observance/),[Shabaan](http://www.irusa.org/tag/shabaan/), [zakah](http://www.irusa.org/tag/zakah/), [zakat](http://www.irusa.org/tag/zakat/), [zakat al-fitr](http://www.irusa.org/tag/zakat-al-fitr/)

*Islamic Relief USA’s Nabeelah Naeem compiled these tips to help us prepare for Ramadan.*

[](http://www.irusa.org/content/uploads/2013/07/How-are-you-preparing-for-Ramadan.jpg)

The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) used to prepare for [**Ramadan**](http://www.irusa.org/campaigns/ramadan/) six months in advance. So, if we really want to make the best of this Ramadan, then we need to prepare for it now! As we know, fasting is more than just abstaining from food but from indecent speech and lustful desires as well. Fasting pushes us to be cognizant of our actions, to be patient and to be moral individuals, thereby increasing our taqwa (God-consciousness). Here are some ways we can improve on different aspects of our life so we can fully benefit from Ramadan, a time when deeds are multiplied.

**1. Fast Voluntarily:**  
This month—Shabaan—is the prime time to start fasting those extra fasts or making up your missed fasts from last Ramadan.

Usamah ibn Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I said, ‘Oh Messenger of Allah, I do not see you fasting in any other month like you fast in Shabaan.’ He said, *‘That is a month to which people do not pay attention, between Rajab and Ramadan, and it is a month in which deeds are lifted up to the Lord of the Worlds. I like for my deeds to be lifted up when I am fasting.’”* (Narrated by al-Nasaai)

The best way to prepare fasting for a whole month is to start fasting often, in order to gain control over your actions, stomach and desires.

*Fast Mondays and Thursdays:*  
Abu Hurairah reported that the most the Prophet (pbuh) would fast would be Monday and Thursday. He was asked about that and he said: “The deeds of people are presented to Allah on every Monday and Thursday. Allah forgives every Muslim except for those who are deserting each other.” (Hasan)

*Fast the White Days—13th, 14th and 15th of each Islamic month:*  
Abu Tharr Al-Ghefari said: “The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, ‘Oh Abu Dharr! If you fast three days of every month, then fast the 13th, 14th and 15th (these are called *Al-Ayaam Al-Beedh*, the White Days).’” (Sahih)

The Prophet said, “(Allah said), ‘Every good deed of Adam’s son is for him except fasting; it is for Me, and I shall reward (the fasting person) for it.’ Verily, the smell of the mouth of a fasting person is better to Allah than the smell of musk.” (Bukhari)

**2. Recite and Reflect Upon the Qur’an:**  
Start now to reflect on portions of the Qur’an to get closer to Allah and understand your responsibilities. Every single time you read the Qur’an, you will uncover more depths of meaning and benefit in this world and the hereafter.

Aishah (ra) related that the Prophet (pbuh) said: “Indeed the one who recites the Qur’an beautifully, smoothly and precisely, will be in the company of the noble and obedient angels. As for the one who recites with difficulty, stammering or stumbling through its verses, then he will have twice that reward.” (Muslim)

**3. Follow the Sunnah and Pray Extra Prayers:**  
Learn more about the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and follow him by emulating his actions.

“Say, [Oh Muhammad], If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” (Qur’an 3:31)

**4. Repent and Make Dua’a:**  
We all make mistakes, but alhamdulilah we can always repent.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: “All the children of Adam constantly err, but the best of those who constantly err are those who constantly repent.” (Tirmidhi)

**5. Give Charity:**  
This world can only be a better place if we help each other. In return, Allah rewards us in both worlds.

The Messenger (pbuh) said, “Allah is in the aid of His servant as long as His aide is in the assistances of others.” (Muslim)

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He will multiply it for him and he will have a noble reward?” (Qur’an 57:11)

The Prophet also said: “Give charity without delay, for it stands in the way of calamity.” (Al-Tirmidhi)

**6. Improve Your Character:**  
Everyone can be a little bit more kind and work on different aspects of their character.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to say: “The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character.” (al-Bukhari)

**7. Eat Healthy and Moderately:**  
With less time to eat in Ramadan, we really need to pay attention to what we eat. Now is the best time to research the nutritious value of the food we eat. While we fast, the food we eat before we start our fast or to break our fast needs to provide the optimal energy so we can accomplish our daily tasks and increase our worship.

*Overeating too is hazardous.*  
Ash-Shafi’i said: “”I have not filled myself in 16 years because filling oneself makes the body heavy, removes clean understanding, induces sleep and makes one weak for worship.”

In order to take full advantage of this holy month, we need to prepare ourselves spiritually, mentally and physically. Insha’Allah if we constantly try to improve ourselves, then when we reach Ramadan, we will be able to easily move to the next level spiritually.

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* 1. Fast Voluntarily: This month—Shabaan—is the prime time to start fasting those extra fasts or making up your missed fasts from last Ramadan. ...
  2. Recite and Reflect Upon the Qur'an: ...
  3. Follow the Sunnah and Pray Extra Prayers: ...
  4. Repent and Make Dua'a: ...
  5. Give Charity: ...
  6. Improve Your Character: ...
  7. Eat Healthy and Moderately:

1. [Seven Ways to Prepare for Ramadan – Islamic Relief USA](http://www.irusa.org/blog/seven-ways-to-prepare-for-ramadan/)

www.irusa.org/blog/seven-ways-to-**prepare-for-ramadan**/

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**10 Ways to Prepare for Ramadan**  
  
  
  
  
  
The blessed & most beautiful month is near and what better time to prepare for it than right now. Some of us deceive ourselves into thinking that when Ramadan comes we will suddenly change and worship Allah night and day but we are only decieving ourselves in thinking like this.   
  
The Sahaaba used to prepare for Ramadan six months in advance. So if we really want to make the best of this Ramadan then we need to prepare for it now!   
  
This may be our last Ramadan for life is so uncertain. Then there is NO doubt that we must make the best of it for the Reward of EVERY good act in the month of Ramadan is multiplied many times over:  
  
**The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:** “Whoever draws near to Allah during it (Ramadan) with a single characteristic from the characteristics of (voluntary) goodness, he is like whoever performs an obligatory act in other times. And whoever performs an obligatory act during it, he is like whoever performed seventy obligatory acts in other times.” **(Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 1887)**  
  
If there was a 75% sale on in the shops surely people would go crazy and even cue all night outside in order to be the first in the store to take advantage of this special offer. So in the same way why should we not take advantage of the immense rewards that are available in Ramadan?   
  
The best way we can make the best of this Ramadan and grab the immense rewards that are available is to prepare for it NOW.   
  
  
**The following are 10 ways in which we can prepare for this beautiful month starting from NOW:**  
  
  
  
**1. Voluntary Fasts**  
  
  
  
What better way of preparing ourselves to fast for 30 consecutive days in Ramadan than to fast the voluntary fasts.   
  
**Fasting Monday and Thursday:**  
  
Abu Hurairah reported that the most the Prophet, (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam) would fast would be Monday and Thursday. He was asked about that and he said: “The deeds of people are presented to Allah on every Monday and Thursday. Allah forgives every Muslim except for those who are deserting each other." **He says:** "leave them for later”. **(Ahmad; Hasan)**  
  
  
**Another is to fast the white days (13, 14 &amp; 15th of each Islamic month):**  
  
  
**Abu Tharr Al-Ghefari said:** “The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said "O Abu Tharr! If you fast three days of every month, then fast the 13th, the 14th and the 15th [these are call the al-ayaam al-beedh, the white days]". **(Ahmad, an-Nasaa'i & at-Tirmithi; Sahih)**  
  
Therefore we should fast these days in order to prepare for the fasting of Ramadan and even after Ramadan we should continue to do so for fasting will intercede for us on the day of judgement:   
  
**Rasulallah (Salallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:** "Fasting and the Qur’an will intercede for the slave on the Day of Resurrection. **Fasting will say:**“O My Rabb! I prevented him from food and desires, so accept my intercession for him.’ **And the Qur’an will say:** “I prevented him from sleep during the night, so accept my intercession for him.’ **He (Sallallahu `Alaihi Wasallam) said:** ‘And they will (be allowed to) intercede.’” **(Ahmad, at-Tabarani, Al-Hakim, Sahih)**  
  
  
  
**2. Reciting Qur’an**  
  
  
  
  
  
**Allah the exalted says:**  
  
“The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Quran was sent down, a guidance for mankind, clear proofs for the guidance, the Criterion; so whoever amongst you witnesses this month, let him fast it." **(Surah al-Baqarah 2:185)**  
  
Ramadan was the month in which the Qur'an was first revealed so it is the month of the Qur'an. We should devote much of this blessed month reciting the Qur'an.  
  
**Az-Zuhri used to say upon the coming of Ramadan,** “It is only about reciting the Qur’an and feeding the poor.”  
  
**Abdur-Raziq said,** “When Ramadan came, Sufyan Ath-Thawri would give up all acts of (voluntary) worship and devote himself to the recitation of the Qur’an.”   
  
But for many of us the Qur'an has gathered a lot of dust since the last time we picked it up.  
  
As Ramadan is fast approaching we must blow off the dust and start to build a close relationship with the Qur'an for it will intercede with us on the day of judgement:  
  
"Recite the Holy Qur’an as much as we can for It will come as an intercessor for its reciter’ on the Day of Judgement" **(Muslim)**  
  
**The Recitor will be in the company of Angels**:  
  
**‘Aa'ishah related that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:** “Indeed the one who recites the Quran beautifully, smoothly, and precisely, will be in the company of the noble and obedient angels. As for the one who recites with difficulty, stammering or stumbling through its verses, then he will have twice that reward.” **(Al-Bukhaari & Muslim)**  
  
**There are Ten Rewards for Every Letter Recited from the Quran in normal times but in Ramadan these rewards are multiplied:**  
  
“Whoever reads a letter from the Book of Allaah, he will have a reward, and this reward will be multiplied by ten. I am not saying that 'Alif, Laam, Meem' (a combination of letters frequently mentioned in the Holy Quran) is a letter, rather I am saying that 'Alif' is a letter, 'Laam' is a letter and 'Meem' is a letter.” **(At-Tirmithi)**  
  
So what better time for us to get into the habit of reciting the Qur'an than to begin to do so right now. We should recite the Qur'an with its meanings and try to understand and implement it into our daily lives.  
  
We should set ourselves realistic targets for how much we should begin to recite each day for e.g. we will recite 1 or 2 pages a day, half a juz (chapter), or 1 juz etc. We should recite however much we can manage and then build up gradually.   
  
  
  
  
**3. Praying Superogatory (Nafil) prayers**  
  
  
  
In Ramadan every voluntary prayer carries the reward of a Fard prayer in normal times and there is nothing more rewarding than a Fard prayer so one can imagine the immense rewards that are available in Ramadan for every voluntary prayer we pray.   
  
**The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:** “Whoever draws near to Allah during it (Ramadan) with a single characteristic from the characteristics of (voluntary) goodness, he is like whoever performs an obligatory act in other times. And whoever performs an obligatory act during it, he is like whoever performed seventy obligatory acts in other times.” **(Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 1887)**  
  
  
In order for us to take advantage of these immense rewards we should start begin now by praying all of the daily Sunnah and Nafil prayers so by the time Ramadan comes we will already be in the habit of praying all of our Sunnah and Nafils and so we cna increase our voluntary prayers even more so during Ramadan. This would be difficult if we were not in the habit of praying Sunnah and Nafil prayers in normal times.   
  
By increasing our voluntary worship we can gain closeness to Allah as well as the company of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in Jannah:  
  
**Rabi'ah ibn Malik al-Aslami reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:** "Ask (anything)." **Rabi'ah said:** "I ask of you to be your companion in paradise." **The Prophet (Sallallahu ALaihi Wasallam) said:** "Or anything else?" **Rabi'ah said:** "That is it." **The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said to him:** "Then help me by making many prostrations (i.e., supererogatory prayers)."  
  
  
  
**4. Making Dua**  
  
  
  
Many of us do not spend as much time as we should do in Dua. Even if we do we rush our dua and our hearts and minds are not present whilst supplicating to Allah.   
  
Many of us rush our Dua's and our hearts are often not present whilst we are supplicating to Allah. Therefore we lose out on much of the benefits and blessings of Dua. We must give more attention to our Dua's and try to concentrate more and be more sincere in our Dua's imagining Allah watching us supplicate to him. We should humble ourselves making ourselves low and not worthy in front of Allah. We should try to cry if we can and have FULL hope that Allah will accept our Dua's if not in this world then in the hereafter.   
  
**Allah Almighty says in the Qur’an:** "When my servants ask you concerning me, (tell them) I am indeed close (to them). I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on me."   
  
**The place of Dua is so honourable to Allah that the Prophet (Sallallahu AlaIhi Wasallim) said:**  
  
"Nothing is more honourable to Allah the Most High than Du`a." **(Sahih al-Jami` no.5268).**  
  
**It is the most excellent of worship:**  
  
**He also said:** "The most excellent worship is Du’a." **(Sahih Al-Jami` no. 1133)**  
  
So let us get into the habit of making sincere Dua's from deep within our hearts and let us not be heedless when supplicating to Allah. What better time than now for us to get into the habit of making more intense and sincere Dua's. So by the time Ramadan arrives we would have already got into the habit of making the long, sincere and intense Dua's which will readily be accepted during this blessed month especially whilst we are fasting and in the latter part of the nights during Tahajjud.   
  
It may help to make a list of what we should ask of Allah suring dua's which we can refer to as a reminder as this may help us to make our dua's longer and more sincere covering everything we want to ask of Allah.  
  
  
  
**5. Sincere Repentance**  
  
  
  
Ramadan is the month where we can gain mercy and forgiveness from Allah for all of our sins past and present.   
  
We should know that Allah is most merciful and most forgiving and loves to forgive:   
  
**Allah says:** O son of Adam, if your sins were to reach the clouds of the sky and you would then seek My forgiveness, I would forgive you.   
  
When a person sins and then sincerely turns to Allah for forgiveness, one will find Allah ready to accept his repentance and to forgive him, as this verse indicates: And whoever does a wrong or wrongs himself, but then seeks forgiveness from Allah, he will find Allah forgiving and merciful.(**Surat an-Nisaa 4:110)**  
  
Allah loves repentance and loves those who turn to him in repentance:   
  
Truly Allah loves those who turn [to Him] in repentance, and He loves those who keep themselves in purity. **(Qur'an 2:222)**  
  
  
Therefore we should get into the habit now of repenting to Allah so that in Ramadan we will make the best of repenting to Allah and continue to do so throughout everyday of our lives.  
How unfortunate is a person who after the end of Ramadan does not gain any forgiveness of his sins from Allah but ends up piling more sins onto his account.  
  
  
  
**6. Generosity & Charity**  
  
  
  
Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) became even more generous in Ramadan than he already was.   
  
  
Ramadan is a time for generosity and giving. It is a time when we think about those who have less than us as well as thank Allah for everything he has given us. Ramadan is an honourable and blessed month, and the rewards for generosity are multiplied in it.   
  
**The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said,** “The best charity is that given in Ramadan.”**(At-Tirmithi).**  
  
**Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said,** “He who feeds a fasting person will gain the same reward as he will, without decreasing from the fasting person’s rewards.” **(Ahmad).**  
  
  
Therefore we should get into the habit of giving in charity now so by the time Ramadan arrives we would increase in our generosity, giving to those less fortunate than ourselves. We should give whatever we can afford as Allah looks at our intentions.  
  
Surely in there hereafter we will regret that which we did not spend in the path of Allah.  
  
  
  
  
**7. Controlling the tongue**  
  
  
  
Ramadan is a time where we must control our desires (nafs) aswell as our tongues:  
  
**Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:** “Fasting is not (abstaining) from eating and drinking only, but also from vain speech and foul language. If one of you is being cursed or annoyed, he should say: **‘I am fasting, I am fasting.”** **(Ibn Khuzaimah, Ibn Hibban)**  
  
Therefore we must protect our tongue from vain speech and foul language. Protecting the tongue is preventing it from lying, back-biting, slander, tale-carrying, false speech and other things that have been forbidden in the Qur'an & Sunnah.  
  
**Those who control their tongues are of the best of Muslims:**  
  
**The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was asked:** “Which Muslim is best?” **He responded,**“One who the other Muslims are safe from his tongue and his hand.” **(Tirmidhi, #2504)**  
  
We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that by the time Ramadan comes we will all of a sudden break a lifetime habit and control our tongues. Again this is another big deception. We must start controlling our tongues now for we cannot for changing lifetime bad habits is not an overnight process.   
  
So how can we begin to control our tongues? This can be done by **"THINKING BEFORE SAYING ANYTHING".**Not just talking without even thinking what we are going to say.   
  
We must think before we speak and before saying anything we should think whether or not what we are going to say is going to please or displease Allah.   
  
If we doubt that what we are about to say may anger or displease Allah then we should refrain from saying it. If we have nothing good to say then surely it is better NOT to say anything at all. Remember we WILL be accountable for everything we said in our lives so we MUST start taking responsiblity for what comes out of our mouths NOW otherwise we will regret it later when it is too late. Therefore we must get into the habit of "thinking before speaking".  
  
So let us begin to control our tongues now so that by the time Ramadan comes we would have adopted good habits and would have been used to controlling our tongues and refraining from saying anything which may anger or displease Allah.   
  
**REMEMBER:** **If we do not protect our tongues then our fasts will be in vain:**  
  
**Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:** “Allah does not need the fast of one who does not abandon false speech or acting according to his false speech.” **(Sahih Bukhari)**  
  
  
  
**8. Improving Character & manners**  
  
  
  
Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came to perfect the character of man and the best of this Ummah are those wioth the best of characters:  
  
**Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam) used to say:** "The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character.” **(al-Bukhari)**  
  
**Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:** "There is none heavier in the scales of the Hereafter than good character **(Tirmidhi & Abu Dawud).**  
  
**Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also said:** “The best loved by me and the nearest to me on the seats on the Day of Resurrection are those who have the best manners and conduct amongst you, who are intimate, are on good terms with others and are humble, and the most hated by me and who will be on the furthest seats from me are those who are talkative and arrogant."**(Tirmidhi)**  
  
Again as with making any big change perfecting our character and manners cannot be done overnight but we must make a start now so that by the time Ramadan comes we would have gained momentum in making the necessery changes to our characters in order for us to be the best of this Ummah and those closest to Allah.   
  
Surely if good character and manners are the heaviest on the scales then can you imagine how much more heavier they will be if we behave with good character and manners during Ramadan?  
  
So let us strive to perfect our manners, character and conduct towards others and know that these good deeds will be of the heaviest on the scales and will enable us to reach the highest ranks of Jannah and the closest to Allah.  
  
  
  
**9. Moderation in eating**  
  
  
  
**On the authority of Al-Miqdaam ibn Maadiy-Karib who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah saying:** "No human ever filled a vessel worse than the stomach. Sufficient for any son of Adam are some morsels to keep his back straight. But if it must be, then one third for his food, one third for his drink and one third for his breath." **(Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasaa’I, Ibn Majah )**  
  
**Ibrahim al-Nakha’i, on of the teachers of Imam Abu Hanifa, may Allah have mercy on them both, mentioned:** “The people ruined before you were done in by three characteristics: too much talking, too much eating, and too much sleeping.”  
  
There is no doubt that excessive eating is not only a cause of many diseases but is also a major factor in stopping us from maximising our worship to Allah.   
  
**Ash-Shafi’I said:** I have not filled myself in sixteen years because filling oneself makes the body heavy, removes clear understanding, induces sleep and makes one weak for worship.  
  
Many of us fast during Ramadan fast during the day and after Iftaar make up for all the food we missed throughout the day by binge eating.   
  
Surely this goes against the very purpose of Ramadan which is to be moderate in eating and to remember those who have less than us. How will we remember the unfortunate when we constantly over eating before and after our fasts?   
  
By controlling what we eat now we will not only benefit our health in the short and long term but moderate eating will make us less heavier and enable us to maximise the amount of worship we do everyday during Ramadan and the rest of our lives.   
  
**Al-Hassan Al-Basri:** “The test of Adam (AS) was food and it is your test until Qiyamah.   
  
**And, it used to be said:** Whoever takes control of his stomach gets control of all good deeds.   
  
**And:** Wisdom does not reside in a full stomach.   
  
**One day, Al-Hassan offered some food to his companion who said:** I have eaten until I am no longer able to eat. **To which Al-Hassan said:** Subhaana Allah! Does a Muslim eat until he is no longer able to eat?   
  
  
  
**10. Implementing Sunnah's into Daily life**  
  
  
  
**Following the Sunnah is a command from Allah:**   
  
"Say (O Muhammad to mankind): "If you (really) love Allah, then follow me (i.e. accept Islamic monotheism, follow the Quran and the Sunnah), Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." **(Quran: 3:31)**  
  
Surely if we follow the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in every aspect of our lives then everything that we do will become a worship to Allah, even going to the toilet, having a bath, dressing and undressing etc   
  
**Reviving the Sunnah into our daily lives:**  
  
**Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:** “Whoever revives an aspect of my Sunnah that is forgotten after my death, he will have a reward equivalent to that of the people who follow him, without it detracting in the least from their reward.” **(Tirmidhi)**  
  
The best habit we can ever have in our lives is to implement the Sunnah into EVERY aspect of our lives so that our whole life and everything we do during it can become a worship to Allah.   
  
We can do this by gradually learning all of the Sunnah's and dua's of every aspect of our day waking up, leaving and entering the Masjid and house, dressing and undressing etc. So let us get into the habit right now of implementing every Sunnah's into our daily lives so by the time Ramadan comes we can continue to implement Sunnah's and gain even more rewards for them.   
  
  
**Download Comprehensive Sunnah collection to implement everyday of our lives:**  
  
[http://www.scribd.com/doc/26863499/B...to-Do-Everyday](http://www.scribd.com/doc/26863499/Beautiful-Sunnah-s-of-Rasulallah-to-Do-Everyday)  
  
  
May Allah enable us to make the best of this Ramadan and make it a salvation for us in the Hereafter. Ameen

*Last edited by Hamza81; 22-05-2012 at 02:31 PM.*

**10 steps to increase our imaan(faith)**  
<http://www.sunniforum.com/forum/showthread.php?t=40459>  
**Forty Good Deeds to do Everyday!**  
<http://www.sunniforum.com/forum/showthread.php?t=50628>  
**Nafl Salaahs to Pray Everyday**  
<http://www.sunniforum.com/forum/showthread.php?t=49289>

**Preparing for Ramadan**  
  
  
The righteous predecessors were very attentive to the worship to Almighty Allah, including paying great attention to the holy month of Ramadan.   
  
So it is known that many of them used to pray to Allah during 6 months after the end of Ramadan to accept their fasting, and then in 6 months they would ask Allah to allow to see the next Ramadan, so that they have another opportunity to make this great worship, which is the fasting in this holy month.   
  
In other words, we can see how the pious predecessors of this Ummah (community of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh) were prepared to meet the Ramadan.   
  
**So Abu Bakr al-Balkhi, may Allah bless him with mercy, said:**  
  
"Rajab is the month to sow the seeds; Shaban is the month to irrigate the crop; and Ramadan is the month to reap the harvest".  
  
**And he also said:**  
  
"Rajab is like the wind; Shaban is like the water-laden clouds; and Ramadan is like the rain".   
  
- **Here a question arose**: how do we need to prepare for Ramadan?   
  
**The answer is:** while preparing for the Holy Ramadan, bear in mind the following:   
  
  
**1. Sincere repentance**  
  
Repentance is demanded to be performed continuously, at any time. But it would be better for you with the approach of the blessed month to hurry up with repentance for all the sins you committed against Allah, and also against His creations.   
  
So with the advent of the Blessed Ramadan, you could proceed to the commission of worship with pure and quiet heart. **Almighty Allah says in the Quran:**  
  
"And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed".   
  
**Al-Agharr ibn Yasar al-Muzani, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi wasallam) said:**  
  
"O people! Turn in repentance towards Allah and ask His forgiveness. I turn towards Him a hundred times a day".  
  
**2. Dua (supplication)**  
  
It is reported from some of the righteous predecessors that they used to ask Allah for the six months to extend their lives to see Ramadan in good health. Then, they used to ask Allah for five months after Ramadan to accept their good deeds committed in it. Therefore, you, by following their example, pray Allah that He gives you an opportunity to celebrate Ramadan in good health and with a strong faith, and ask Him for the help in worshiping Him, and for acceptance of good deeds.   
  
**3. Joy in light of the coming of the Holy month of Ramadan**  
  
The approach of this blessed month is a great boon for every believer after all, because this month is a period of blessing. It is a month when the gates of Paradise are open and the gates of Hell are closed. It is a month when the Holy Quran was sent down.   
  
**Allah said:**  
  
"Say, In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy - in that let them rejoice; it is better than what they accumulate".   
  
**4. Replenishment of the left obligatory fastings**   
  
**It is reported from Abu Salama, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said:**  
  
"I heard Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as saying: "Sometimes I missed some days of Ramadan, but could not fast instead of them except in the month of Shaban"."   
  
**Ibn Hajar, may Allah bless him with mercy, said:**  
  
"It can be drawn from the desire of Aisha to make up the missed days of Ramadan in the month of Shaban that any missed fasts to make up have to be made up before the next Ramadan comes".   
  
**5. Acquisition of knowledge related to the dignity of the month of Ramadan, and with certain provisions of the fast.**  
  
**6. The coming completion of all deeds that can distract you from worship in the month of Ramadan.**  
  
**7. Explanation to the household, relatives and friends of the basic provisions of the fast.**   
  
Motivation to "little ones" to participate in the fast, so that they could become accustomed to the basic kinds of worship in Islam from their childhood.   
  
**8. Fasting in the month of Shaban, in order to prepare for the month of Ramadan.**  
  
It is reported in an authentic hadith from Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, that she said:   
  
"Sometimes the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, fasted so much that he even thought he did not break his fast in that month, and sometimes he broke his fast so much that we would say he did not fast. I did not see the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) fast in the whole month except Ramadan. I never saw him fast in any month more than he did in Shaban".   
  
**It is also reported from Osama Bin Zeid, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said:**  
  
"O Messenger of Allah! I did not see you fasting in any month as you do in the month of Shaban".   
  
**The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wasallam) said:**  
  
"People neglect this month which is between Rajab and Ramadan, in this month the deeds of the people are presented to Allah; so I like my deeds to be presented while I am fasting".   
  
This hadith explains the wisdom of fasting in the month of Shaban, namely the fact that deeds or actions are presented to Allah. Also, some scholars have pointed out other wisdom of the fasting in the month of Shaban, which lies in the fact that this fasting is like a sunna-prayer committed before the obligatory farz-prayer. Thus, a man prepares himself, a sort of warm-up before the fulfillment of the obligatory form of worship.   
  
**9. Reading the Quran**  
  
**Salamah Ibn Suhayl, may Allah be pleased with him, used to say:**  
  
"The month of Shaban is the month of reciters of the Quran".   
  
When Shaban came, Amr Ibn Qays al-Malai, may Allah be pleased with him, used to close his store and devote his time to reading the Quran.   
  
Now, having said all this, let's look at our situation, and answer ourselves, being honest, how we prepare for this blessed month, and how we are going to meet it?   
  
We ask Almighty Allah for help and assistance in preparing for the fasting, and for a worthy meeting of the Holy month of Ramadan!   
  
**Source:**[http://islambrowser.blogspot.com/201...r-ramadan.html](http://islambrowser.blogspot.com/2010/07/preparing-for-ramadan.html)

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