

STARTS RAMADHAAN 1



SAYF
PRODUCTIVITY
NETWORK

A Guide For Ramadhan

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INTRODUCTION

This is meant to be a mini guide to help those who may be confused about what to do to make their Ramadhan productive.

SECTION 1

In this section, we detail the things you need to put in place in order to get the best out of this Ramadhan.

1. Accountability Partner

The first thing you must do as Ramadhan approaches is to find an accountability partner for the month of Ramadhan, preferably, someone with whom you are not so close.

What will you do together?

1. You will discuss your goals.
2. You will discuss a limit to your screen time and/or social media time.
3. You will submit your ticked to-do list everyday with your reflection.
4. You will submit your screen time everyday using Digital Wellbeing or Stay Focused to track it.
5. You will query your partner on unfinished tasks and enforce the consequences you agree on. And then you will try to be helpful to them in overcoming whatever they seem to be struggling with.

SECTION 1: What To Prepare

2. Minimize distractions

Maybe 30 years ago, it was enough to just set goals and plan how you would achieve those goals; today, it is no longer possible.

There is so much distraction that if you want to achieve anything, you must also make solid plans on how to avoid the distractions.

2.1. Social media and Phone

Here, you will have to be honest with yourself. Allah will not help whoever is not truthful to themselves.

So, ask yourself, "is there genuinely anything I am doing on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp that will be adversely affected if I quit for this one month?"

If you answer yes, then ask yourself again, "is what would be affected so big and important, that even if I knew this would be my last Ramadhan, I still would not quit these apps?"

(It is almost certain that among those who will read this are some who will not witness the next Ramadhan).

If your answer is no, quit all those social media, and ask for Allah's help, then use it as a means to make dua to Allah, "Oh Allah, I have tried to be sincere with myself and abandoned what could stand between me and you so that you may be pleased. Oh Allah, do not turn me away" (use your words, this is just an example).

SECTION 1: What To Prepare

If your answer is yes, then that means you cannot quit social media. In that case, you will need to do some things.

1. Time blocking

You MUST have specific time for using social media during Ramadhan. Not just a fixed amount of time, but a specific period of time.

So, it may be 5pm – 6pm, or it may be some other time.

If you need to be on social media frequently maybe because of the nature of your business, you may create 4 blocks of time to use social media.

So maybe between 7 and 7.30am. Then 2.30 and 3pm. Then 5 and 5.30pm. Then 7.30 and Isha.

2. Have time limit for overall screen time and for social media apps. This should be agreed with your accountability partner.
3. Turn off notifications from all social media apps.
4. Avoid your phone for the first 1 hour of your day to increase clarity and to focus on dua, istighfaar, and tilaawah.
5. Avoid your phone for the last 30 minutes of your day to ensure you sleep with clarity. Use this last 30 minutes to read the Quran or tafsiir.

2.2. Distraction of People

You must pray to Allah about this and be very strict with your time during Ramadhan. It is just one month, but it may change the course of your whole life if spent properly or destroy it if spent otherwise.

SECTION 1: What To Prepare

3. Tawbah

From the punishment of sins is that a servant may be prevented from being able to do good deeds. So you must prepare for Ramadhan with seeking repentance from Allah, from all the minor and major sins.

And do not consider anything little. Each time a servant sees a sin as "little", the sin becomes bigger before Allah.

You know too, all the inappropriate things you do, whether or not there are explicit prohibitions on these things. You must seek repentance from all, consciously, if you want to stand a chance of benefitting from Ramadhan.

4. Physical Habit Tracker

The next thing is to get a physical habit tracker, then you plaster it on the walls of your room and add your goals. Everyday, as you go in and out, it will serve as a reminder for you. As unimportant as it may seem, having a physical tracker pasted on your wall can massively change your whole Ramadhan.

5. Work from a to-do list

Every night, before sleeping, you should have a to-do list that contains all the things you want to do the next day, whether related to Ramadhan or not.

Not working from a to-do list can be really disastrous for your Ramadhan.

SECTION 1: What To Prepare

This to-do list, you tick as you complete each task on it, and at the end of the day, you show it to your accountability partner while they show theirs to you too.

Note: the excitement of ticking tasks on the to-do list may make one forget the real purpose of your actions.

Constantly check your intention and remind yourself that you are performing each action in order to please the Allah, so that He may rectify for you all that concerns you and oversee for you all your affairs and lift off you all your burdens, and you must remember you are sending those actions forward as insurance for a future that starts the day you are put in the grave – alone.

6. Reflections

Every night, before you make a to-do list for the next day, you check your to-do list for that particular day and reflect upon it.

You ask yourself why the unchecked tasks were not finished, and you proffer a solution so as not to have a repeat of the same error the next time. All of this, you write down in a "reflection" under the to-do list.

You write down your state, what you are doing right and want to improve on, as well as what you aren't doing right and want to fix.

Without daily reflection, the whole month would pass you by before you know it.

SECTION 1

7. Dua

Next is to start making dua about the month of Ramadhan. In your dua, you must be as desperate as you can be.

You must make dua like you would if you were certain this were your last Ramadhan, and then you are facing uncertainties about whether you would be able to spend it productively or not.

You must start by praising Allah and acknowledging his might, power, and mercy.

Then you acknowledge your weakness and inability to accomplish anything without His help.

Then you show desperation and how your whole life rests on being productive this Ramadhan.

8. Set goals

The final part, is to set goals and milestones you plan to reach in Ramadhan. This helps you stay focused on the path as well as easily see when you are veering off.

SECTION 2: GOALS AND HABITS

1. Quran

The first goal you need to set is one relating to the Quran, and you should also divide this into two.

1.1. Qiraa'ah

Here, your aim is to read as much as possible from the Quran without necessarily pondering over it.

For Qiraa'ah, you will have to determine how many times you plan to finish the Quran.

Assuming you want to finish once, then it is best to stack your recitation with your solawaat.

So, before or after every solaat, you would read 4 pages. If you plan to finish twice, then 8 pages.

If thrice, then 12 pages.

So, determine how many times you plan to finish, and how much you will have to read every solaat.

If stacking your talaawah to the solawaat cannot work for you, then you can pick two times a day and do all the talaawah then.

Also, note that stacking to solaatul maghrib might not be easy. In this case, you can do the talaawah together after isha before you sleep, or you can do it when you wake up in the midnight.

SECTION 2: GOALS AND HABITS

What is important is to be very specific about time and place and repeat EVERYDAY.

1.2. Tadabbur

Here, your aim is to read as slowly as possible to ponder on the meaning and apply it to your life as you read.

One of the best methods of doing tadabbur is to listen to a reciter you feel very connected to his recitation, and then to follow the English translation (Dr Mohsin Khan's) as you listen.

For other tips on tadabbur, you can visit t.me/sayfworkshop to listen to our class on tadabbur.

For tadabbur, it is enough to have a goal of finishing the Quran just once.

NB: If you understand Arabic deeply, then you do not have to set two goals for the Quran.

Your tilaawah can also be your tadabbur since it is easier to read and ponder at the same time.

1.3 Tafsiir

You should make specific plans to read from the tafsiir as well. This will aid you in knowing the background story behind a lot of the chapters. You can read tafsiir of sa'di if you want something concise, or Ibn Kathir if you want something detailed.

2. Sodaqoh

You should also set a goal to increase in sodaqoh everyday.

To make this achievable, you should dedicate a minumum percentage of your balance that you would spend in charity everyday.

SECTION 2: GOALS AND HABITS

2.1 What To Spend

Here, I suggest you should go for 0.5% or more everyday. If you spend 0.5% of your balance daily, that means if you have a total of 100k at the beginning of Ramadhan, everyday, you will spend 500 in Sodaqoh.

Remember that what you spend in this month is actually what is yours forever from your wealth, as for that which you keep locked in your account, it will either end up in the toilet (when spent on food) or with other people, but that which you spend in charity continues to be yours forever.

So, certainly, this is not an amount too huge to spend during this month.

And remember, Allah will replace whatever you spend during this month with multiples of it.

2.2 Where To Spend

You should also have a plan on how to spend in sodaqoh.

You may decided to remove it after every two days and give to someone you know who is struggling, or a fundraiser, or anything.

But what is best is to look at those around you – especially from family members and neighbors – and give them.

SECTION 3

3. Solaat

As for Solaat, then we know that Allah said, "And seek help with patience and solaat", and we know that it will be the gauge of a servant's success on the day of Qiyaamah, so you must set some goals around it.

3.1 Khushoo

A solaat without khushoo (humbleness, concentration, presence of mind) is useless, and in fact, many scholars believe that such solaat will not be accepted and must be paid back.

In Suuratul Mu'minuun, Allah hangs the success of a believer on having a present, solemn and submissive mind in solaat.

So, attaining more of this must be our goal this month.

As for how to attain khushoo, a few classes from our Inner Circle program will be shared to our 30-day reflection group insha Allah.

And we hope those will be helpful enough.

Khushoo is not measurable, so you must ensure to include something on it everyday in your reflections to see if you are where you wish to be.

SECTION 3.2

3.2 Some Other Goals

Some other goals to set around solaat include:

1. Observing every solaat in congregation.
2. Never missing the Iqaamah each day of Ramadhan.
3. Never missing the first row each day of Ramadhan.
4. Never missing the sunan rawaatib (superogatory prayers attached to the obligatory ones: 2 rak'ah before Fajr, 2 before and after zuhr, 2 after maghrib, and 2 after isha).
5. Staying long at the masjid (or in your spot of prayer for the women) after solaat to remember Allah, and to await the next solaat if possible.
6. Never missing solaatu dduhaa.
7. Observing two rak'ah of naafilah in the last part of the night even if you had observed taraawiih before sleeping.

This is because the last part (around 2.30am – Fajr) is still a special time for the acceptance of dua.

Each of these things has a hadith that has been reported from the Prophet about its virtue, but which the nature of this guide does not allow us to cite.

SECTION 3.3

3.3 For The Women

1. The women, when off-solaat, should ensure that at the times of each of these solaat, they go to their places of solaat and read from the Quran and make dua.

This will help keep them in shape for when they are eventually pure.

2. The woman who does not pray taraawiih in congregation, but prays at home (and that is best) should know that the best time to observe it is still the last part of the night.

So, she should target this time.

3. Observing the solaat in its earliest possible time. This is from the greatest signs of one's veneration for Allah.

SECTION 4

4. Habit of Shukr and Dua

From the habits you must form this Ramadhan is the habit of making dua before every task and every affair, no matter how little or seemingly unimportant.

Some of the predecessors used to pray to Allah for everything, such that if the strap of their sandals were to cut, they would make dua to Allah to aid them in fixing it.

As for Shukr, it means gratitude, and it is the secret of closeness to Allah. Shaytaan said, "Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them grateful" (7:17)

This is because he understood that once the door of shukr is closed upon a servant, every other door of entering upon Allah would be closed.

Another thing about Shukr is that Allah would not take away a blessing from a servant while the servant is doing shukr for it as he should.

And if a servant wants an increase in anything, then the way of shukr is the guaranteed way.

SECTION 4

How To Do Dua and Shukr Consistently

1. Before every task, make dua, no matter how little.

Before every tilaawah, make dua to Allah to ease it for you and make it beneficial.

Before sleeping, ask Allah to make it easy for you to wake up and make your night beneficial.

2. During each solaat, you should reflect on all the blessings you enjoyed, no matter how "little", between the last solaat and the current one, and do shukr.

Then you should think about the tasks you plan to achieve between this current solaat and the next one, and make dua about them.

SECTION 5

5. Habit of Dhikr and Istighfaar

From the habits we must also create in this Ramadhan is the habit of ensuring our tongues are always went with adhkar, and our hearts ponder on the meaning.

These adhkar, when said and pondered on, have enormous benefits that cannot be quantified.

Also, in this month, you must make it habit to seek a lot of forgiveness from Allah, and to be quick in turning to him whenever there is a shortcoming.

How To

The istighfaar as well, should be reflected upon at the time of each solat: you identify your shortcomings between this solaat and the last, and make istighfaar for them.

You also ponder on your past major sins, seeking repentance amindst fear that Allah may have delayed the punishment of those sins for you.

Perhaps, the sins you committed with non-mahram men and women, the punishment is being postponed for you till you marry.

So, you do a lot of istighfaar out of fear of this.

Another time to specify for istighfaar is the time of sahur.

SECTION 5

The time of sahur is a time people waste: the older generation waste this time on the television while the younger generation waste it posting several statuses, meanwhile this is a special time for seeking forgiveness from Allah.

Allah says, when describing those who eventually made it to Jannah,
[Surah Adh-Dhāriyāt: 18]

"And in the hours before dawn, they were (found) asking (Allâh) for forgiveness."

And note: "shortcoming" does not always mean a major sin, but being given the opportunity of Ramadhan and wasting a second of it is a shortcoming, and not doing enough shukr is a shortcoming.

As for the adhkaar, then they should be said every possible time.

And you must seek the help of Allah even in being able to remember Him.

But you should particularly list our the morning and evening adhkar.

SECTION 6

6. Compulsory actions

One thing people often forget in Ramadhan is that while Quran and sodaqah are great deeds, the best deed to get close to Allah are the ones He has made compulsory.

So you must evaluate the things Allah has made obligatory upon you and see which ones you are defaulting at, and then make dua and make a plan to get better at those acts this Ramadhan.

So, you must think about the rights of your parents, the rights of your husband, the rights of your wives.

You must think about dressing the way Allah has commanded.

You must think about leaving off music.

You must think of all these things even before you think of reading much of the Quran.

Allah said in a hadith (Riyadu ssaliheen, 95): "And the most beloved thing with which My slave comes nearer to Me is what I have made compulsory upon him".

SECTION 6

Action step

From all these listed goals, each one you plan to adopt should be added to your physical habit tracker, and to your to-do list which you submit to your accountability partner.

Then everyday, you will mark as you do each task and reflect on the whole day at night.

So, at the end of it all, your goal-list could look something like this:

- Tilaawah 10 pages, 4am, sitting-room desk.
- Tilaawah 5 pages, after Fajr, spot of solat.
- Tilaawah 5 pages, after asr, spot of solat.
- Tadabbur 10 pages, on the bus while going to work.
- Daily sodaqoh
- Sunan Rawaatib
- Duha, 7.30 am, just before stepping out for work.
- Midnight naafilah, by 4am
- Pray in first row
- Pray in congregation

And so on...

And we ask Allah to make this beneficial for all.

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**May Allah make this beneficial to its readers,
and to its writers.**

Assalaamu'alaykum.