

الأسرة في رمضان

WASEELAH HAMĀMUSH

THE FAMILY DURING THE MONTH OF RAMADHAN¹²

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Our Salaf as-Sālih (Righteous Predecessors) used to pay special attention to the month of Ramadhān, and they used to ask Allah for Ramadhān to reach them. And when the month came to an end, they would ask Allah to accept it from them. They did this because they were well aware of the value of Ramadhān and its precious moments. And so they made sure to take advantage of this month by preparing for it individually and with their families, but not merely in a festive way but by increasing in taqwā and eemān through prayer and fasting. Thus, following the exemplary example set by our Righteous Predecessors and by our Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), I thought it necessary to remind the heads of the households the duty they must undertake vis-à-vis their families so as to achieve what the Righteous Predecessors achieved [during this month]. And whoever follows their way then they will succeed and whoever does not follow their way then their hopes will be dashed and they will fail.

THE VIRTUES OF RAMADHĀN AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO FAMILY LIFE

Allah the Most High states,

¹ Translated by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Bennett.

² An excellent article written by Waseelah Hamāmush from the Arabic magazine *al-Islāh*

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ ١٨٥

The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong).

[Al Baqarah 185]

Allah has singled out the month of Ramadhan from all other months by placing in this month a plethora of blessings and virtues, and from them:

- ✓ The smell that comes from the mouth of the fasting person is better before Allah than the fragrance of musk.
- ✓ The angels seek forgiveness for the fasting person until he breaks his fast.
- ✓ The [big] devils are shackled [during this month].
- ✓ The doors of Paradise are opened and the doors of the Fire are closed.
- ✓ The night of Decree happens during this month, and it is better than a thousand months. And whoever is deprived of its goodness then he has been deprived of all goodness!
- ✓ The sins of a fasting person are forgiven on the last night of Ramadhān.
- ✓ Every night during Ramadhān, Allah liberates souls from the fire.

So these are some of the special features and blessings during this month, and so how are we going to receive this month? Are we going to receive it by busying ourselves with a variety of food and beverages? Are we going to be dissatisfied with its arrival and sluggish in our worship? We seek refuge with Allah from all of this! The upright, righteous family, however, receives this month by offering sincere repentance, and every member of this family is determined to seize every moment of opportunity by performing righteous deeds. Indeed, the month of Ramadhān is a servicing stop for replenishing and purifying the soul and also for taking an increase in knowledge and worship by continuously remaining obedient and upright. It is also a time for purifying the soul from all the evil deeds and acts of disobedience that have soiled it.

PARENTAL GUIDANCE FOR THE MUSLIM FAMILY DURING THE MONTH OF RAMADHĀN

This is some parental guidance for the Muslim family, which will help the family to spend Ramadhān in the same way the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to, so that the heads of the household

can endeavour to adhere to it and nurture their families upon good:

(1) Just before Ramadhān during the month of Sha'bān, the parents should make sure to remind their children about the specifics of Ramadhān by gathering at home for fiqh sessions on fasting or preferably by attending fiqh sessions at the masjid, as stipulated by the Most High's statement:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا
مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَّا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ٦

O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones; over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded.

[At Tahrīm 6]

(2) Getting small children accustomed to fasting and admonishing them to be patient and encouraging them by offering them gifts at the time of breaking the fast. The Salaf used to get their children into the habit of fasting. On the authority of Rubayyi' bint Mu'awwidh,

أَرْسَلَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عِدَاةَ عَاشُورَاءَ إِلَى قُرَى الْأَنْصَارِ " مَنْ أَصْبَحَ مُفْطِرًا فَلْيَتِمَّ بَقِيَّةَ يَوْمِهِ وَمَنْ
أَصْبَحَ صَائِمًا فَلْيُصِّمْ ". قَالَتْ فَكُنَّا نَصُومُهُ بَعْدَ وَنُصِّمُ صِبْيَانَنَا وَنَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ اللَّعْبَةَ مِنَ الْعِهْنِ فَإِذَا بَكَى
أَحَدُهُمْ عَلَى الطَّعَامِ أَعْطَيْنَاهُ ذَاكَ حَتَّى يَكُونَ عِنْدَ الْإِفْطَارِ

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) sent a messenger to the village of the Ansār in the morning of the day of 'Aashurā' (10th of Muharram) to announce: 'Whoever has eaten something should not eat but complete the fast, and whoever is observing the fast should complete it.' "She further said, "Since then we used to fast on that day regularly and also make our boys fast. We used to make toys of wool for the boys and if anyone of them cried for food, he was given those toys till it was the time of the breaking of the fast."³

Imam an-Nawawi said,

³ Saheeh al-Bukhāri (1960).

In this hadith is a [reminder] to get small children accustomed to acts of obedience and to get them use to doing acts of worship. However, they (the children) are not legally required to perform these acts. Al-Qādi said that it was reported from ‘Urwah that when children are capable of fasting then fasting is incumbent upon them. This is incorrect and inadmissible based on the following hadith:

رُفِعَ الْقَلَمُ عَنْ ثَلَاثٍ عَنِ النَّائِمِ حَتَّى يَسْتَيْقِظَ وَعَنِ الصَّغِيرِ حَتَّى يَكْبُرَ وَعَنِ الْمَجْنُونِ حَتَّى يَعْقِلَ أَوْ يَفِيقَ

The pen has been lifted from three: From the sleeper until he wakes up, from the minor until he grows up, and from the insane until he comes back to his senses or recovers. And Allah knows best.⁴

(3) Urging the household to strictly observe their obligatory prayers and for the males to pray them in the masjid, and this attitude also applies to the rest of the obligatory acts of worship. They should be urged to pray the Tarāweeh; for indeed it is a comfort and relief. For, al-Mustapha (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said,

مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

Whoever stands [to pray at night] during Ramadan, due to faith and seeking his reward from Allah, his previous sins will be forgiven.⁵

And just as he encourages his small children to through the incentive of gifts, he should also encourage them to stand in payer at night by offering them gifts at the end of the month.

(4) To instil in them the desire to recite lots of the Qur’an, to revise whatever they have memorised and to reflect over its meanings. And they should also approve of organising Qur’anic competitions between the children. When the month of Ramadhan entered, Imam Mālik used to turn away from reading hadith and sitting with the people of knowledge and turn his attention to reciting the Qur’an. When Sufyān ath-Thawari entered the month of Ramadhān, he would leave off all types of worship and just turn his attention to reciting the Qur’an and reflect over its meanings. Allah states,

⁴ Sharh Saheeh Muslim (8/14).

⁵ Saheeh Muslim (759).

كَتَبَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ ۖ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ

[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.

[Sād 29]

The Qur'an is lost on those who do not reflect and give consideration to its meanings. Allah states,

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ۝

Do they not then meditate on the Quran? And if it were from any other than Allah, they would have found in it many a discrepancy.

[An Nisā 82]

(5) To remind them about the things that corrupt a person's fast—things that many people overlook. For example, idle talk, obscene language, backbiting, tale carrying, false statements and every other type of forbidden speech. Ramadhān is not just about abstaining from food and drink. Rather, it is also about preventing your limbs from indulging in forbidden acts. The Prophet (ﷺ) (الله عليه وسلم) Said,

وَالصَّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ فَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمٌ صَوْمٍ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلَا يَرْفُثُ يَوْمِيذٍ وَلَا يَسْخَبُ فَإِنْ سَابَهُ أَحَدٌ أَوْ قَاتَلَهُ فَلْيَقُلْ إِنِّي امْرُؤٌ صَائِمٌ

Fasting is a shield. When any one of you is fasting on a day, he should neither indulge in obscene language, nor raise the voice; or if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him he should say: I am a person fasting.⁶

(6) Seizing the opportunity throughout Ramadhān to call to Allah during family gatherings and to persist in enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

⁶ Saheeh Muslim (1151).

(7) Not to burden the mother by requesting her to prepare a variety of different foods. For she also needs to increase in eemān during this blessed month. We advise the mother to utilise the time she spends in the kitchen—not forgetting to make her intentions sincerely for Allah when feeding her children and husband—by remembering Allah and listening to beneficial Islamic lectures and lessons via the radio. And I encourage the fathers and brothers to provide radios and cassette players in the kitchen because women spend a lot of time in the kitchen.

(8) We urge all members of the family to spend for Allah’s sake on the neighbours and the needy. On the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) who said,

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَجْوَدَ النَّاسِ وَكَانَ أَجْوَدَ مَا يَكُونُ فِي رَمَضَانَ حِينَ يَلْقَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ وَكَانَ يَلْقَاهُ فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ فَيُدَارِسُهُ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَجْوَدُ بِالْخَيْرِ مِنَ الرِّيحِ الْمُرْسَلَةِ

Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was the most generous of all the people, and he used to reach the peak in generosity in the month of Ramadan when Jibreel met him. Jibreel used to meet him every night of Ramadan to revise the Qur'an. Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was the most generous person, even more generous than the fast wind [in doing good].⁷

And if only the father and the mother would give to their children some money so that they could in turn give it to the poor in charity then this would be an effective way to teach the children to be charitable. Alternatively, they could have a money box to collect money for the poor.

(9) It is a religious duty on the parents to organise tafseer or hadith sessions for the children at home during the month of Ramadhān, and that they keep the children away from spending time in front of the television or playing too much. We mentioned previously the Most High’s statement:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ٦

⁷ Saheeh al-Bukhāri (6).

O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones; over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded.

[At Tahrīm 6]

(10) The father should remain vigilant in encouraging his family to be active during the last ten nights of Ramadhān. For indeed one of these nights is better than a thousand years! This is what Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to do. Allah states,

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ۚ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ۚ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ

شَهْرٍ ۚ

Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during the Night of Decree. And what can make you know what is the Night of Decree? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months.

[Al Qadr, 1-3]

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to strive in seeking the night of Decree, and he instructed his companions to do the same. He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to wake up his family during the last ten nights, hoping to encounter the night of Decree.

So let the Muslim be aware of being slack during these last ten great nights. So the father spends these nights at the market places purchasing things for his children on Eid, and the mother is in the kitchen preparing sweet dishes for the children. But perhaps neither of them will live to see Eid!

(11) Maintaining family ties and checking up on the needy amongst them and providing them with food, due to the great reward that results from this. And occasionally it should be imposed upon the children to keep family ties with their relatives so as to drill in them the importance of maintaining family ties.

(12) Whomever Allah allows to perform 'Umrah during the month of Ramadhan then that is a blessing from Allah. It has been authentically established that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said

عُمْرَةٌ فِي رَمَضَانَ تَعْدِلُ حِجَّةً

Umrah during Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj.⁸

RAMADHĀN AND ITS POSITIVE EFFECTS ON THE FAMILY

Ramadhān is the greatest time for building faith, and so through the directions given above the Muslim family can reap many great rewards through the course of life. We will mention them here to whet the appetite and to encourage action so that the Muslim family can achieve these rewards during and after Ramadhān. And from these great lessons are

- ✓ The tawheed of Allah and making sure to observe it in privacy and publicly, and to deepen one's firm belief in the Last Day, Paradise and the Fire during fasting and praying, and remaining constant in supplication to be freed from the Fire.
- ✓ Loving of the Qur'an, remembrance of Allah and persistently attending the masjid, during and after Ramadhān.
- ✓ A constant sense of altruism towards the suffering of the poor and the needy, being struck with a sense of solidarity.
- ✓ A love for performing voluntary acts of worship because it causes him to inherit the love of Allah.
- ✓ The love and affection that is generated between family members through educational interaction and even at the table when they are breaking their fasts.
- ✓ The love of knowledge and a sense of its necessity in the life of a Muslim, which cultivated through attending circles of remembrance in the masjid.
- ✓ The love of calling to Allah and remaining diligent in performing this call because it is a religious duty.
- ✓ Enduring the hardships that result from fasting and standing in prayer, and to train oneself to pardon, to overlook, to be forbearing and to demonstrate brotherly love.
- ✓ To rid oneself from being miserly and stingy by being charitable.
- ✓ Arranging the hours of the day between worship, eating and drinking and learning.

⁸ Saheeh al-Bukhāri (8).

Last but not least, we make an appeal to all Muslim families to comprehend the value and worth of the month of Ramadhān and its precious moments which are irreplaceable. Ramadhān is an opportunity that no one with sound intellect can afford to squander. It is an opportunity to lighten the load of sin and [impending] disaster. It a chance for sins and evil deeds to be forgiven and an opportunity to be delivered from the fire. It is a prospect to take stock of oneself and to strive for the sake of Allah.