

revelation from Allah in the Quran is something which will increase one in knowledge as well as generosity. So pick up the Quran, read one page, two pages, whatever you are able to read, and contemplate over our lord's divine guidance so that we can be guided in this world and the next.

pick up the books of the sunnah, gain knowledge of your lord, your prophet and your religion.

Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every muslim as the prophet said:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم

'Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every muslim'

Knowledge of one's lord, one's prophet and one's religion is fundamental and necessary for every single muslim as well as having knowledge of the pillars of Islam and the pillars of Iman. And as you all know, may Allah have mercy upon you that Fasting Ramadan is the fourth pillar of Islam and Fasting is by far the most intimate of the acts of worship because Allah Most High tells us clearly that the fasting is for Him alone and only He knows the reward.

يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: كُلُّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ آدَمَ لَهُ إِلَّا الصِّيَامَ، فَإِنَّهُ لِي وَأَنَا أَجْزِي بِهِ، وَالصِّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ، فَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمٌ صَوْمِ أَحَدِكُمْ، فَلَا يَرُفُثُ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَسْحَبُ، فَإِنْ سَابَهُ أَحَدٌ أَوْ قَاتَلَهُ، فَلْيَقُلْ: إِنِّي امْرُؤٌ صَائِمٌ "

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ، لَخُلُوفٌ فَمِ الصَّائِمِ أَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، مِنْ رِيحِ الْمِسْكِ»

Allah's Messenger said, "Allah said, 'All the deeds of Adam's sons (people) are for them, except fasting which is for Me, and I will give the reward for it.' Fasting is a shield or protection from the fire and from committing sins. If one of you is fasting, he should avoid sexual relations, flirting with his wife and quarreling, and if somebody should fight or quarrel with him, he should say, 'I am fasting.' By Him in Whose hands my soul is, the unpleasant smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the sight of Allah than the smell of musk. " Saheeh Muslim

Indeed
Precisely because
fasting is a shield for us, it becomes imperative that we perfect our self-control. Each day, try to focus on one aspect of yourself. Is reading the Qur'an not part of your daily routine? Start this Ramadan to read, ponder and understand the Qur'an daily. A little bit at a time. Read a page only per day at the least, but much more if possible.

and Sunnah

and know that

أصول
فروع
عقائد
معتقدات

فقه
أصغر
أكبر
فروع
كيفية

Is your problem internal? Do ^{we} ~~you~~ lie? Backbite? Gossip? This is the best month to work on such issues because without ridding ourselves of negative habits, we risk not having our fasts accepted by Allah. We learn from Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ، فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ حَاجَةٌ فِي أَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ»

“Whoever does not give up lying, false, harmful speech, and acting upon it, and evil actions, then Allah had not need of the person abandoning and leaving off his food and drink” (Al-Bukhari, Book 3, Hadith 127).

What more important lesson could we learn in Ramadan than that if we do not engage in a plan to assess ourselves thoroughly and then do go about making changes in our lives to please Allah, then Allah will not accept our fasting!

Everyone has a favorite Ramadan-related memory when it comes to the family level. What is yours? Is it being woken up early in the morning by your mother or father so that you could eat sahur? Is it waiting at the dinner table with a date in one hand and a glass of milk in the other, praying for the minute when you can make iftar? Is it going to Tarawih Prayers? Is it staying up all night on the 27th night of Ramadan in case that was Laylat Al-Qadr (the Night of Power)? Is it the foods associated with Ramadan that your family makes? What is it? Whatever the memory, remember to be grateful this Ramadan that you have a family and brothers and sisters with whom you can share such memories, food and shelter. Remember this Ramadan and thank Allah for the security, peace and protection you have while some of the other Muslims throughout the world are not as fortunate.

Learn to put aside petty differences between ^{our} ~~you and you~~ brothers and sisters during this month so that ^{we} ~~you~~ all can get along. If ^{we} ~~you~~ made a mistake, go and apologize to your brother or sister or mother or father. If ^{we} ~~you~~ were wronged, even so- be the first to apologize for any part you had in the incident. Go one step further this Ramadan and learn to serve your parents better by doing things that they always ask you do—but now do them before they ask you! Surprise them with increased acts of obedience, of sharing, of caring and of love! Volunteer to make the iftar preparations. Clean up the house in preparation for `Eid. Call or write people close to you with whom you have not had communication throughout the year. Learn to renew ties, to strengthen ties, and if possible, build new ties! Ramadan is a month in which we should come closer together as families and friends, in sha' Allah.

Life in our community in Ramadan is totally different, we see people at the masjid in Ramadan whom we've never seen our entire life here. The whole community seems to be transformed during Ramadan as people see each other consistently for almost 29 or 30 days.

Whether the event is the iftar or the Tarawih Prayers, people find themselves coming to the masjid daily and with each event, the collective bond is strengthened. This Ramadan, learn something new about your community members. Meet new members with whom you have not had contact before. Greet them, introduce yourself, and get to know one another. Many people emerge from Ramadan having made new friends, having strengthened existing friendships, and most of all, having repaired friendships broken because of fights and misunderstandings.

In addition, one can focus on learning more about charity and other affairs. We recall from the hadith mentioned above, narrated by Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) "was the most generous of all the people, and he used to reach the peak in generosity in the month of Ramadan when Gabriel met him." Go to your masjid and learn the Quran, Sunnah, learn more about your lord, His messenger and your beloved religion of Islam. Ask about joining classes to learn the Quran, learning Arabic, learning the correct Aqeedah, learning the pillars of your religion and how to prepare yourself for Ramadan.

This would be as good a time as any to find out all the beautiful acts of charity possible in Ramadan and indeed throughout the year. Ask about the poor and needy ones in the community and reach out to them throughout the year and not only in Ramadan.

This Ramadan, let us strive to learn. There is so much to be learned and practiced, but if we never start, we will continue with each year of our life to fall farther and farther behind, lamenting how much more we have to learn! Let us not let this Ramadan slip away from us. Let us use this Ramadan as a starting point to take account of our lives at the individual, family, and community levels. The upcoming month of Ramadan, as we know, is full of mercy, forgiveness, also learning by reading, listening and pondering the Quran, and an opportunity for us and our families to be liberated from the Hellfire. Knowing that alone should make us want to do everything in our power to draw closer to Allah through our fasting, our praying, our reading of the Qur'an, our giving of charity, and most importantly learning about Allah's religion! Only Allah knows if we are to live to experience another Ramadan. Let's make the most of this upcoming Ramadan!