

Ramadan Preparation Program...

Week 1: “Wake up your Heart” Week

This week we'll work on refining and polishing our hearts from the exhaustion of the previous year and the lazy state of summer vacation. We want them to sparkle again like last Ramadan. Focus on improving our relationship with Allah through: concentrating during prayer, reading and listening to lectures on the greatness and graciousness of Allah and how we should worship Him, about Jannah and what we get there if we leave this world in the right state. Learn and recite remembrance (Azkar, esteghfir & tasbeeh) as taught by Prophet Muhammad in free moments between daily tasks, and learn their benefits. Learn the steps of repentance (Tawba) and take a decision NOW to quit the sins we're committing. Polish the dust off our Quran and try to finish it all at least once before Ramadan (if you read one chapter a day you'll finish in just 30 days). Buy a good Quran explanation (tafseer) book so we'll know what we're reading. In General, make a serious decision to be better Muslims this year, and ask Allah to support us after showing Him we mean what we say in ACTIONS not just in words. This is the time to quit smoking/drinking, be regular in praying, stop using bad language or talking about others behind their back (ghayba) or backbiting (nameema), lower our gaze, take time alone to meditate, think about the purpose of Creation and why we're in this world, improve our manners with others, evaluate ourselves the past year objectively and think of how to improve this year.

Recommended reading:

<http://www.islaam.com/Section.aspx?id=9> scroll to: “Matters of the Heart”

Tawba:

Beginners: <http://www.muttaqi.org/sinless.htm>

Advanced: <http://www.islaam.com/Article.aspx?id=266>

Azkar: http://www.islamic-knowledge.com/Hisn_al_Muslim/Hisn_Al_Muslim.htm

Week 2 : Fasting & Quran Week

Here is a sweet reminder of Ramadan to give you an emotional push to go on: Make up lost fasting days from last Ramadan starting this week, those who don't have days to fast can start fasting Monday & Thursday (Sunnah) to get physically conditioned for Ramadan. Start reading/ listening to Quran more each day, start learning the correct way for reciting (tajweed) and practice by reciting loudly at least 5 minutes each day, focus on reading one chapter everyday with tajweed and try to finish the Quran before Ramadan. **Keep up the activities from last week**

Fasting: <http://www.islaam.com/Section.aspx?id=13>

Quran (about): <http://www.islaam.com/Section.aspx?id=7>

Quran (read/listen): <http://www.reciter.org/>

Quran in 6 languages (read/listen): <http://quran.al-islam.com/>

Tafseer: <http://www.translatedquran.com/allsurah.asp>

Transliteration for those who don't speak Arabic:

<http://www.qurantransliteration.org/>

Week 3 : Fajr / Zakah & Sadaqa Week

Start praying Fajr on time (before sunrise!) those who already do: add in at least a couple of units (rak'at) before Fajr. Pay Zakat-ul-Fitr (\$10.00 per person in the household) any time during Ramadan till Eid-ul-Fiter Prayer. Set aside your voluntary charity (Sadaqa) money, and calculate your obligatory charity (Zakah: 2.5% of your income saved for a whole year). Give it in Ramadan the reward is multiplied, but do make your calculations this week to remind yourself and set the money aside.) Learn the Islamic rulings of Zakah so you're sure you're doing the right thing and spending in the right venues. Learn the various ways of Sadaqa other than donating money (ex: good manners, teaching for free, lending your items, talking nicely about people behind their back, preparing food packages for the poor) . ***Keep up the activities from the previous weeks***

All about Zakat: <http://zakat.al-islam.com/>

About Prayer: <http://www.islaam.com/Section.aspx?id=11>

How to pray

http://www.arabacademy.com/how_to_pray_e.htm

<http://www.islamicity.com/Mosque/salat/salat9.htm>

Week 4 : Night Prayer & Sunnah Week

Start practicing night prayer (Qeyam) at least 3 times in the week, start by adding in 2 rak'at after E'sha prayer before you sleep, then advance into waking up 30 minutes before Fajr for the last 3 rd of the night, you can read from your Quran during night prayer so you could finish the Quran. Start adding in 12 Rak'at of Sunnah prayers in total to your 5 prayers daily as follows: 2 before Fajr, 4 before Zohr & 2 after it, 2 after Maghreb, and 2 after E'sha, followed by 2 raka'at of Shaf' + 1 rak'a of wetr at the end – you can also start praying 2 rak'at of Doha everyday between sunrise and Zohr prayer. If you wait up reading Quran after Fajr until sunrise to pray Doha , this is the equivalent of reward (thawab) of an Omra! Try it at least once on the weekend, and in Ramadan you can do it more often insha'allah: imagine the thawab of an Omra in Ramadan!

Please also learn about the daily routine and diet of Prophet Muhammad (SAAW) and plan to live and eat healthy from now on (hopefully you're not smoking or over-eating anymore since week one). This way you will be able to maintain your health about which you will be asked in front of Allah. And also, you will learn the true lessons of Ramadan in relation to avoiding over-indulgence, and to **concentrate on the needs of your soul rather than the needs of your body** like you do all year. It's sad some think of Ramadan as the month of food and fun, when it's really the month of ALLAH! Remember to ***Keep up the activities from the previous weeks***

Sunnah: <http://www.islaam.com/Section.aspx?id=8>

40 Hadiths in 13 languages: <http://www.40hadith.com/>

Night Prayer (Qiyam): <http://www.themodernreligion.com/basic/pray/qiyam-ul-layl.html>

Week 5 : Connecting with Family & Friends Week

How's your relationship with your parents, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, friends? How you maintain your connection with them (Selat el ra7em) is a very important activity that could either multiply or erase your rewards (thawab)! So give it full attention this week, compile small packages of simple Ramadan gifts of useful & educational material (booklets, tapes, stickers, kids books) and offer to everyone around you, if you can't visit in person please at least call, SMS, or email those who are far away to wish them a blessed Ramadan, start with those you don't like or those you haven't talked to in a while, this way you're sure of the great rewards.

Keep up the activities from the previous weeks

Importance of maintaining Kinship Ties in Islam:

http://www.albalagh.net/food_for_thought/0002.shtml

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/Eid/1427/SocialTies/Articles/01.shtml>

Week 6 : Doaa (supplication) & Tawba Week – Ramadan Night Family Dinner

Keep up the activities from the previous weeks. Start chartering your objective for Ramadan this year: what exactly do you want to achieve? How are you going to do that? put that on paper and commit to it fully and seriously; Concentrate on reciting remembrances (esteghfir, tasbeeh, azkar) & Doaa to Allah to grant you and your loved ones the fast of Ramadan and accept it from you. Make a sincere repentance (Tawba) of all your bad deeds of the previous year, those you know and those you don't know. once and for all, quit any useless or harmful habits. Try to finish Quran this week. **Give Ramadan food packages to poor families and please include something educational or useful in them** . Plan a simple family & friends dish party dinner to wait for the announcement the night of Ramadan and be happy together receiving our beloved month.

Buy small Ramadan and Eid gifts for the kids and enjoy your achievement of the past 6 weeks, you should now be in full gear to enjoy that special time of year. Please refer to the Ramadan Daily Schedule for adults and kids to plan your days and maximize your thawab in Ramadan insha'Allah.

What is your objective this Ramadan?

http://www.islamonline.net/English/Ramadan/Heart_Softening/School/09.shtml

How to prepare for Ramadan? What are the rewards of those who fast? (translation of Amr Khaled lecture)

<http://www.studying-islam.org/articletext.aspx?id=1015>

I wish you and your families a happy and blessed Ramadan, and please keep me in your prayers.

