



Islamic Institute of Toronto
Education for Virtuous Living

How to Benefit from Ramadhan Optimally

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In The Name Of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

المعهد الإسلامي في تورنتو

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How to Benefit from Ramadhan Optimally

by Shaikh Ahmad Kutty

Ramadhan is the most blessed month in the Islamic calendar. It is primarily a spiritual training course intended to help us cultivate essential virtues and skills in order to lead a meaningful life. Most often we live at a highly superficial level of our existence, forgetting our true essence and identity as human beings. In other words, we become totally preoccupied with the physical and material dimensions, forgetting the spiritual core of our personalities. Ramadhan comes to remind us our true identity as humans, and as to discipline ourselves in such a way that we are fully awake to our full spiritual potential.

In order to benefit from the blessed month of Ramadhan and its spiritual regimen, I suggest that we focus on the following:

1. Welcome Ramadhan with ardent fervor and spirit and expect to come out of it fully transformed in body, mind, and soul.
2. Perform all of the acts of worship while being fully awake to their inner dimensions and meanings. Most often we allow ourselves to go through these rituals as mere mechanical chores with the result that we gain virtually no benefit from them either spiritually or morally.
3. Let our fasting be a fasting of body, mind, and soul. As Imam Ghazali said, the vast majority of people fast only for namesake. For while staying away from food, drink, and sexual gratifications, their minds, eyes, ears, tongue, and other faculties feast on haram (unlawful matters). Therefore, in order to gain any true benefit from our fasts, we need to impose a total self-restraint upon all our faculties and stay away from all sinful and idle thoughts, words, and actions, and nurture the thought and remembrance of Allah.
4. Ramadhan is not merely a month of fasting. It is rather a season to cultivate all sorts of virtues and healthy habits. It is the perfect opportunity to break free of all negative habits that have been holding us back from achieving the true happiness and perfection that is ours as a birthright. So seize the opportunity and focus on achieving real goals to make it a true lifechanging and life-enhancing experience.



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5. Ramadan is the month of empathy and generosity. In fact, one of the main purposes of fasting is to instill in us empathy for the poor and the less deprived. By exposing us to compulsory hunger, we are given a practical lesson in hunger and thirst and thus we become better motivated to empathize with the poor. Hence we are ordered to practice the optimum level of charity in the month of Ramadan.

6. Ramadan is the time to familiarize ourselves with the Qur'an, the true source of guidance, illumination, healing, and mercy—Allah's the perfect gift to humanity. We can only do justice to the Book when we go beyond merely chanting and memorizing it to reflecting and meditating upon the Revealed Word and respond to it in the true spirit by acting upon its teachings.

7. One of the main purposes of all of the acts of worship in Islam is to cultivate in us a true sense of community and spirit of fellow humanity. Therefore, it is imperative that our compassionate words and acts be extended not only towards ourselves but also towards all of Allah's creation.