

Maintaining Momentum After Ramadān

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at-tazkiyah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

To help us maintain momentum after Ramaḍān, the following are a few guidelines to implement once we reach the end of the blessed month:

1. Be grateful to Allāh ﷻ for the great favour He blessed us with, and for the many good actions He granted us the tawfīq to carry out. If we are grateful to Allāh ﷻ, He will grant us tawfīq to do more, as He states in the Glorious Qurʾān:

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ

...If you are grateful (to Me), I shall definitely increase you (in My Favours) ... (14:7)

2. Acknowledge one's shortcomings in fulfilling the rights of Ramaḍān and duly valuing it. The blessings and Mercies that Allāh ﷻ showers in this month are so magnificent that nobody can claim to have truly valued them. We surely fell short for which we should confess to Allāh ﷻ and seek forgiveness.

The above are two generic points which should be adhered to whenever we are granted the tawfīq to carry out any religious activity, such as performing ḥajj and ‘umrah, spending time in the company of one’s shaykh, engaging in da’wah work, attending a madrasah to acquire ‘ilm, etc.

3. Fast for six days during Shawwāl. Our beloved Nabī ﷺ said,

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَهُ سِتًّا مِنْ شَوَّالٍ كَانَ كَصِيَامِ
الدَّهْرِ

Whoever fasts throughout Ramaḍān and then follows that up with six (fasts) in Shawwāl, it will be as though he has fasted the whole year. (Muslim)

Since we will already be habituated to fasting due to Ramaḍān, the easiest method would be to fast for six consecutive days immediately after the day of ‘Īd. Fasting on other days of the month, whether consecutively or not, holds the same virtue but sometimes procrastination leads us to missing the opportunity. Therefore, it is best to fast as soon as possible after the day of ‘Īd.

4. Reflect upon the good deeds we carried out during Ramaḍān which we do not usually carry out during the rest of the year. Note these good deeds down in a notebook, putting them into two categories:
 - a) Good deeds that are impossible or seem difficult out of Ramaḍān, like the twenty raka‘āt of Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh, reciting the Qur’ān in great quantity, remaining in the Masjid for a long time daily, etc.
 - b) Good deeds that are easily possible like performing the five daily ṣalāh in congregation, reciting a portion of the Qur’ān daily, dhikr of Allāh ﷻ, etc.

We should then convince ourselves to at least continue carrying out the good deeds that fall in the second category, and make an earnest effort to do so throughout the year.

5. Resolve to abstain from every disobedience to Allāh ﷻ. We abstain from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ during Ramaḍān by fulfilling the farā’id and wājibāt and abstaining from ḥarām and

makrūh taḥrīmī acts. This demonstrates that we have the ability to refrain from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, whether in Ramaḍān or not. We must internalise, accept and affirm this reality, and subsequently resolve to abstain from every disobedience to Allāh ﷻ throughout our lives.

6. Reflect on what the goal of Ramaḍān was; forgiveness from Allāh ﷻ, safety from Jahannam, entry into Jannah, changing our lives for the better, the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ until we breath our last. This should remain our goal throughout the year, during every day, hour, minute and second of our lives. We should regularly reflect on our lives and check whether we are heading towards the fulfilment of this goal. If we see that we are striving to fulfil the goal, then we should be grateful to Allāh ﷻ and exert more effort. If we realise that we are neglecting the goal and becoming lax, we should become concerned and make an earnest effort to reaffirm our resolve.

7. Remain in good company and good environments, and refrain from bad company and bad environments. This is of utmost importance, as good company and good environment are instrumental in maintaining our Dīnī efforts and good habits; whilst bad company and bad environment create an inclination within us towards bad actions, and drain away the drive and motivation for good.
8. Regularly sit in the gatherings of a pious and reliable ‘Ālim. Make a target of at least once a week. This will increase our knowledge and understanding of Dīn, which will provide us with opportunities to carry out more good deeds and enable us to progress in Dīn. It will also go a very long way in saving us from falling into negligence.
9. Make a firm intention to perform ḥajj. Those upon whom ḥajj is farḍ should not delay, rather, they should perform ḥajj this very year. One who passes away without performing ḥajj after it had become farḍ upon him, will be sinful and questioned on the day of Qiyāmah. Those

who have already performed ḥajj but are in a position to perform nafl ḥajj, should not hesitate in undertaking this greatly rewarding and fruitful journey. We must learn how to perform ḥajj from reliable ‘Ulamā.

The Ultimate Way to Maintaining Momentum

These guidelines will assist us in maintaining momentum after Ramaḍān. However, some of us may feel that we lose momentum to such an extent that even acting upon these guidelines becomes difficult. In order to overcome this, we need to understand that blessed places like Makkah Mukarramah and Madīnah Munawwarah, blessed company like the company of one’s shaykh, and blessed moments like Ramaḍān, Laylatul Qadr, 15th Sha‘bān, etc. have their own exclusive nūr (spiritual light). Through the aid of this spiritual light, we are able to see the correct path and follow it by carrying out good and abstaining from bad. When these blessed moments pass, or we leave the blessed place or blessed company, the light disappears leaving us in darkness. Hence, we are no longer able to see the correct path and take the right steps. This leads to us stumbling in darkness and slumping back into negligence.

The ultimate way to maintain momentum after Ramaḍān is to create our own lights within our hearts through the process of Tazkiyah (purification of the heart). Once our hearts are purified and enlightened with the light of Taqwā and love of Allāh ﷻ, we will have a light of our own through which we will be able to identify the correct path and follow it wherever and whenever we may be. We will then no longer be dependent on the light of Ramaḍān. Rather, we will be a source of light for ourselves and others too. As a result, the momentum we experience in the blessed moments of Ramaḍān will remain and increase, and we will be able to carry out good and abstain from bad at all times.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us the ability to maintain momentum after Ramaḍān and as a result, make every moment of our lives pleasing to our Creator. Āmīn.

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