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# LIGHTS, BLESSINGS, ACTION

## Setting the Stage for a Transformative Ramadan

SeekersGuidance Seminar  
Faraz Rabbani and Shireen Ahmed / April 2019

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## Lights, Blessings, Action: Setting the Stage for a Transformative Ramadan

Four Sessions:

- One. The Key Aims of Fasting and Ramadan
- Two. Neglected Sunnas of Ramadan
- Three. The Keys Devotions of Ramadan--and How to Make the Most of Them
- Four. Questions & Answers

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## Part One The Key Aims of Fasting & Ramadan

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## The Verses on Fasting: Five Key Lessons

Five Lessons in Qur'an, 2.183-186:

- One. Month of Qur'an
- Two. Nurturing Mindfulness (taqwa)
- Three. Becoming grateful (shukr)
- Four. Magnifying Allah (takbir)
- Five. Realizing Closeness (qurb) of Allah

<https://quran.com/2/183-186>

بِأَيِّهَا الْيَوْمِ بِأَمْرًا كَرِيمًا  
عَلَيْكُمْ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الْبَرِّ مِنَ قَبْلِهِمْ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ أَيُّهَا مَنْ دُرِّدُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ كُنْتُمْ  
يَوْمَئِذٍ أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَمَا نُفِصِلْ بَيْنَ أَيَّامِ الْيَوْمِ  
بِأَيِّهَا الْيَوْمِ بِأَمْرًا كَرِيمًا ﴿١٨٤﴾ كَيْفَ  
لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ نَفْسٌ تَقِيهَا الْيَوْمَ بِأَمْرًا  
كَرِيمًا ﴿١٨٥﴾ أَيُّهَا مَنْ دُرِّدُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ كُنْتُمْ  
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الْيَوْمِ بِأَمْرًا كَرِيمًا ﴿١٨٦﴾ أَيُّهَا مَنْ دُرِّدُوا  
مِنْ حَيْثُ كُنْتُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَمَا  
نُفِصِلْ بَيْنَ أَيَّامِ الْيَوْمِ بِأَمْرًا كَرِيمًا ﴿١٨٧﴾

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## Lesson One: Month of Qur'an

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“Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed as a guide for humanity with clear proofs of guidance and the distinguishing standard.”

- One. Recite or listen to the Qur'an daily
  - Two. Commit to a routine of recitation
  - Three. Begin with purpose and intention
- Qur'an, 2.183-186

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## Lesson Two: Nurturing Mindfulness (taqwa)

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“O believers! Fasting is prescribed for you—as it was for those before you—so that you become mindful of Allah.”

- One. Purpose in life: seeking Allah
  - Two. Means: mindfulness (taqwa)
  - Three. Practically: what do I need to remove from my life to become more mindful of Allah?
- Qur'an, 2.183-186

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## Lesson Three: Becoming Grateful (shukr)

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“... so that you will become grateful to Allah.”

- One. Reflecting on blessings
  - Two. Expressing appreciation inwardly through feeling gratitude—and outwardly through submission with gratitude
  - Three. Blessings: everything
  - Four. Blessings: existence at every moment; faith and guidance; material and spiritual; direct and indirect
- Qur'an, 2.183-186

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## Lesson Four: Magnifying Allah (takbir)

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“Allah intends ease for you, not hardship, so that you may complete the prescribed period and proclaim the greatness of Allah for guiding you...”

- One. Takbir: Allah is the Absolutely Great
  - Two. Making Allah the central purpose, aim, aspiration, and intention in life and all actions
  - Three. Key: intentions in all actions, and remembrance
- Qur'an, 2.183-186

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## Lesson Five: Realizing Closeness

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“When My servants ask you about Me: I am truly Close. I answer the call of those who call upon Me. So let them answer My Call and believe in Me, so that they may be rightly guided.”

One. The basis of the relationship with Allah: neediness (iftiqar)—and recognition of Allah’s Closeness (qurb)

Two. Allah’s Closeness: He is sustaining you at every moment, in every way

Three. Cultivate in fasting and hunger; in devotions through intention; and in all intentions

Qur’an, 2.183-186

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## Part Two Neglected Sunnas of Ramadan

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## Five Neglected Sunnas

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One. Suhur

Two. Daily Intentions

Three. Night Worship

Four. Breaking Fast: Sunnas, Social

Five. Establishing Routines in Ramadan

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## Neglected Sunnas: One. Pre-Dawn Meal (suhur)

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“Have the pre-dawn meal,” said the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), “Truly, the pre-dawn meal is blessed.”

One. Physical assistance. Spiritual assistance

Two. Training for night worship

Three. Time for high intentions

Four. Socially: family sacrificing for Allah

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**Neglected Sunnas: Two. Daily Intentions**

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One. Intention has three elements: (1) resolve to perform an action; (2) seeking the Closeness to Allah; (3) at the beginning of the action  
Two. Fast with the firm intention of seeking the Closeness, Love, and Good Pleasure of Allah  
Three. Make secondary intentions as a means to this

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**Neglected Sunnas: Three. Night Worship**

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The greatest night worship in Ramadan: Tarawih (20 rakats, confirmed sunna, even at home, men and women)  
Training for establishing a routine of night worship  
Best night worship: before Fajr  
Use Suhur time to pray some Tahajjud (night vigil worship)  
Make this a habit

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**Neglected Sunnas: Four. Breaking Fast**

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “The fasting person has two joys: a joy when they break their fast, and a joy when they meet their Lord.”  
One. Mean the dua of fasting: “O Allah, it is for You I fasted, and upon Your provision do I break my fast.”  
Two. Social dimensions: break fast with others; host others; accept invitations  
Make the social spiritual through intentions and following its sunnas

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**Neglected Sunnas: Five. Establishing Routines**

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Sayyida A’isha described the Prophet (peace be upon him): “If he did anything, he would make it a consistent habit.”  
Four keys to routines:  
One. Higher purpose  
Two. Set small habits you can sustain  
Three. Renew intentions  
Four. Review your commitments  
Increase gradually, sustainably

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**Part Three  
The Keys Devotions of  
Ramadan—& How to  
Make the Most of Them**

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**Five Key Devotions in Ramadan**

- One. Fasting
- Two. Prayer
- Three. Qur'an
- Four. Remembrance
- Five. Charity—and Zakat

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**Key Devotions: One. Fasting**

The key to fasting is neediness (iftiqar) to Allah

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**Key Devotions: Two. Prayer**

The key to prayer is presence of heart  
How:

- One. Turning to Allah before you begin
- Two. Meanings before words
- Three. Meanings of each position
- Four. Returning to Allah after the prayer
- Five. Remaining on remembrance outside prayer

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## Key Devotions: Three. Qur'an

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Key to the Qur'an is realizing that it is Allah addressing you

- One. Reverence and Awe
- Two. Hope and Yearning
- Three. Seeking Guidance
- Four. Asking for all good

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## Key Devotions: Four. Remembrance

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Key to remembrance (dhikr) is consistency  
"Keep your tongue moist with the remembrance of Allah," said the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)

The Lasting Good Deeds:

- Subhan Allah ('Truly glorious is Allah')
- Alhamdulillah ('All praise is Allah's')
- La ilaha illa'l Llah ('There is no god but God')
- Allahu Akbar ('Allah is Truly Great')

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## Key Devotions: Five. Charity & Zakat

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Keys to charity and zakat are certitude, gratitude, and high intentions

- One. Give regularly in Ramadan
- Two. Give to the most needy and most beneficial
- Three. Give with high intentions and without self-satisfaction

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## Part Four Questions & Answers

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