



Parenting Advice for Muslim Mothers

Ramadan Special Edition

We see Ramadan as a yearly opportunity to detox not only physically but also spiritually, to limit our involvement with the *dunya* and revive our connection with Allah ﷻ, and to exert ourselves in collecting as much reward for the Hereafter as possible. Before the blessed month arrives, we have high hopes and grand plans for seclusion and focused *ibadah*, for long heartfelt duas, and for turning over a new leaf to become a better person, and a more obedient servant of Allah ﷻ.



And then Ramadan starts and we find ourselves physically weakened and sleep deprived, spending the most valuable times for the acceptance of *dua* preparing *Suhoor* and *Iftaar*, feeling more irritable than usual in dealing with exceptionally irritable children and spouse. Time seems to be flying by in the same day to day activities, except children are also on vacation so we are even more occupied with them than usual. We feel disheartened and frustrated, and wonder if perhaps Allah ﷻ does not want us to get close to Him.



If you can relate to the above, read on...

The key to spending a satisfying Ramadan as mothers of young children lies in understanding the purpose of Ramadan, which Allah ﷻ has outlined in the following ayah:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (2: 183)

Translation: O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain piety.

The attainment of *taqwa* includes:



- Leaving everything that Allah ﷻ has forbidden us from
- Doing what Allah ﷻ has commanded us to do
- Avoiding everything that adversely affects our relationship with Allah ﷻ and doing only what pleases Him

Ramadan helps in the attainment of *taqwa* in many ways, foremost by weakening our *nafs* and strengthening our will-power against its relentless demands, for it is primarily our *nafs* which urges us to disobey Allah ﷻ and fulfill its own wishes instead. Enduring hunger and thirst, resisting temptations, sharing what we have worked hard to earn, exerting ourselves in *ibadah* all contribute to achieving this

end, so that we may become better able to overcome our *nafs* to leave sins and fulfil the commands of Allah ﷻ. **Hence the ultimate purpose of Ramadan is to learn to control our *nafs* in order to become more obedient to Allah ﷻ, to sacrifice our desires to act according to His Will.**

Keeping this goal in mind, mothers, specially of young children, can make the most of Ramadan by taking to heart the following advice:

1. Accept the Will of Allah ﷻ

While we may want to spend all our time in Ramadan on the *musallah*, reciting Quran and performing *nawafil*, and our heart may yearn to pray *Tarawih* in the mosque every night and sit in *aitikaaf* in the last 10 days, we must accept that being mother to our children is a responsibility that Allah ﷻ has placed upon us, and to fulfill this responsibility to the best of our ability is required by Him ﷻ. **Hence, to sacrifice what we want (ritual worship) in order to do what He wants from us at this point in our life (taking care of our children) will be more rewarding for us and better for us spiritually, and more conducive to achieving the purpose of Ramadan.**

2. Keep Your Eye on the Ultimate Goal



The ultimate goal of Ramadan is to change ourselves to become more pleasing to Allah ﷻ.

Since most of us have trouble controlling our anger and being patient in the face of provocation, we should consider this Ramadan to be an opportunity to overcome these spiritual diseases, and try to adopt the prophetic attributes of *sabr* (patience), *hilm* (forbearance), and *rahmah* (mercy) and improve our *akhlaaq*. Remember that there are an overwhelming number of verses of the Quran and sayings of the Prophet ﷺ extolling the virtues of patience and kindness and forbidding anger and meanness, particularly to relatives. The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, “The most beloved of you to Allah ﷻ is the one who is best to His Creation,” and then specifying those from the creation of Allah ﷻ who most deserve our kindness he ﷺ said, “The best among you is the best to his family.”

Getting angry with our husband and children for demanding our time and attention, shunning them, grumbling and complaining about them displeases Allah ﷻ and defeats the purpose of Ramadan. On the other hand, if we fulfil our responsibilities to them with patience, kindness and mercy, we will actually be working towards the ultimate goal of Ramadan.

3. Remember that Parenting for the Sake of Allah ﷻ is also an act of *Ibadah*



While we strive to exert ourselves in ritual acts of worship, such as prayer and recitation of Quran, to earn rewards in Ramadan, we forget that **raising children who become obedient servants of Allah ﷻ does not only earn us reward while we are engaged in it, but such children are a *sadaqah jaariyah* that will continue to benefit us after we pass away as per the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ.** And while our efforts may not be appreciated by our children or even our spouse, Allah ﷻ is *ash-Shakoor* (The Most Appreciative) who does not let even our smallest effort or even an intention go unrewarded.

While Ramadan is an opportunity for adults to revive their connection with Allah ﷻ and earn rewards for the Hereafter, it is also a unique opportunity for the *tarbiyah* of our children- to teach them about different aspects of the deen, inspire them to follow it, and inculcate prophetic values and habits. And every effort we put into this is an act of and a means of lasting reward for us.

In sha'Allah over the next few days we will be sharing Ramadan-specific activities for you to do with young ones in your care, in line with the spirit of this blessed month. Stay tuned!