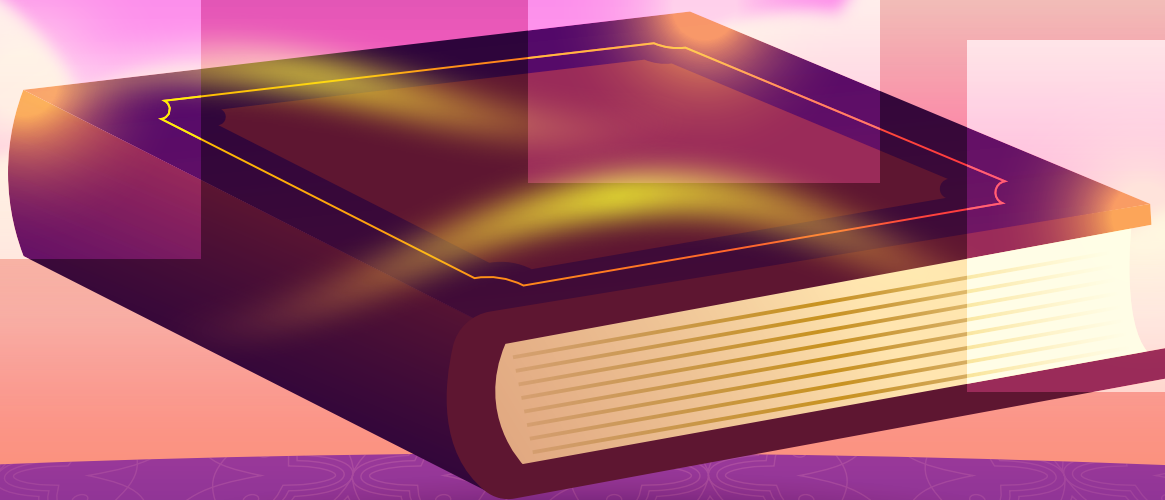




NEW MUSLIM
ACADEMY



LESSONS FROM RAMADAN FOR DAILY LIFE



Ramadan is described by muslim scholars as a school or university, because of the many lessons it teaches us. It is a month of training and discipline. The lessons learned during this month can be taken and applied for the remaining eleven months. Each year, Ramadan comes around again, as a refresher course to help us remember, maintain and improve on these lessons.

FIRST LESSON

The first lesson of Ramadan is God's abundant grace and kindness. God has given us many opportunities with certain times and places wherein acts of devotion are more rewarding and virtuous. We are encouraged to seek these times and make the most of them. In Ramadan, we are told that the gates of paradise are open and that God frees people from the fire every night. However, God's grace and kindness is not restricted to Ramadan. Throughout the year, there are times we should take advantage of. Some examples are, the best days of the year, the first ten days of the month of the pilgrimage, and the last month of the Islamic calendar.

The grace of God in Ramadan teaches us that we need to constantly improve. We can do that in two ways. First, by letting go of the negative aspects in our life, our sins and shortcomings. Ramadan is a month of change. We are told to seek God's grace and forgiveness as it is the month of repentance to God. The second way we improve is by doing as many good deeds as we can. The Messenger Muhammad used to increase in his study of the quran with recitation. He also increased in giving charity and other acts of devotion. We are actively encouraged to seek out the night of special status during the last ten nights, for it is a night better than a thousand months.

SECOND LESSON

The second lesson of Ramadan is one about will power and self-control. During daylight hours, we exercise discipline by not eating, drinking or fulfilling our sexual needs. We show restraint and discipline, even though it would be relatively easy to fake fast or to hide away to eat and drink without anyone seeing. We have certain knowledge that God is watching us and is aware of what we do at all times.

THIRD LESSON

Being conscious of God is the third lesson of Ramadan. This constant awareness of god, which leads to self-control, needs to be there beyond Ramadan. Each day, we must do our utmost to remember God and carry out his commandments. When we are tempted to sin, we should remind ourselves of God watching us, and then practice restraint just as we do in the days of Ramadan.

FOURTH LESSON

The fourth lesson from Ramadan is developing the traits of resilience, perseverance and endurance. As muslims, we should strive to manifest these traits with ourselves, our shortcomings as well as with others. The Messenger Muhammad told us that if someone curses us while we are fasting, we should reply by saying, “i am fasting.” This is a reminder to ourselves and others to endure patiently. Throughout the year, we need to exercise patient perseverance. Life is full of challenges, and being resilient is a sign of strong character.

FIFTH LESSON

The fifth lesson of Ramadan is that it should enhance our character. The Messenger Muhammad was the most generous of people, but he would be at the most generous in the month of Ramadan. If enhancement of our character is visible as we fast in Ramadan, it should carry on for the rest of the year. Good character is the hallmark of a muslim. Ramadan is a time when we can work on ironing out the flaws we have.

SIXTH LESSON

The sixth lesson we can take from Ramadan is the importance of time management. In Ramadan we have to be disciplined. We wake up before dawn to eat and prepare, and then we perform the prescribed ritual devotions. We try to find pockets of time throughout the day to read, recite, or listen to the Quran or to do some other good deed. We then break our fast after sunset, and offer the nightly devotions. Ramadan shows that we can fit worship and devotion into our busy lives. Post Ramadan will not be the same level of intensity, but we should maintain some level of extra devotions throughout the year.

May allah enable us to apply these lessons from Ramadan and to transform our lives post-Ramadan.

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