



Ādāb of Fasting, the Masjid, and Hospitality in Ramaḍān

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Ramaḍān is a divinely bestowed gift and a month of inner refinement and spiritual beauty. It is not merely a change in eating habits, sleep patterns, or daily routines. Rather, it is a unique opportunity granted by Allāh ﷻ for self-discipline, patience, mercy, and restraint.

While outward acts such as fasting, prayer, and charity are clearly visible, the true success of Ramaḍān lies in ādāb and conduct. It is the refinement of one's inner manners that strengthens a person's relationship with Allāh ﷻ and governs their dealings with others, thereby giving true meaning and lasting value to the acts of worship performed during this blessed month.

This article addresses three key areas where the observance of ādāb is especially important: during fasting, in the masjid, and in hosting others.

1) Ādāb of Fasting

a) Fasting Beyond Hunger and Thirst

Allāh ﷻ did not legislate fasting merely to deprive us of food and drink. Rather, fasting is meant to cultivate taqwā - a state of awareness, restraint, and love that govern us. Allāh ﷻ says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain taqwā." (Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:183)

This verse clearly establishes that the goal of fasting is not hunger itself, but the moral and spiritual consciousness that emerges from it. If a fasting person learns to restrain lawful desires for the sake of Allāh ﷻ - every effort should be made to save ourselves from unlawful speech, behavior, and attitudes.

b) Guarding the Tongue: The Core of Fasting Etiquette

Among the greatest tests of fasting is controlling the tongue. Backbiting, lying, sarcasm, mockery, argumentation, and the use of bad language quietly strips our fast of its reward. The Prophet ﷺ warned us by saying:

"مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ حَاجَةٌ فِي أَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ"

"Whoever does not give up false speech and acting upon it, Allāh has no need of him giving up his food and drink." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī": 1903)

This ḥadīth serves as a serious warning, reminding us that fasting while engaging in sinful speech deprives a person of its reward from Allāh ﷻ.

The tongue should be treated as an amānah during Ramaḍān, restrained to speech that is beneficial and necessary. For this reason, our pious ‘ulamā’ would even avoid permissible speech and instead occupy themselves with the recitation of the Noble Qur’ān.

c) Patience When Hungry, Tired, and Provoked

Hunger and fatigue often make people irritable, short-tempered, and emotionally reactive. Ramaḍān exposes our weaknesses to help us improve. Patience is among the highest forms of worship. The Prophet ﷺ taught:

وَالصَّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ فَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمٌ صَوْمٍ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلَا يَزِفْتُ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَسْحَبُ فَإِنْ سَابَّهُ أَحَدٌ أَوْ قَاتَلَهُ فَلْيَقُلْ إِنِّي امْرُؤٌ صَائِمٌ

"Fasting is a shield. When any one of you is fasting on a day, he should neither indulge in obscene language, nor raise the voice; or if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him he should say: I am a person fasting." (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 1151d)

Subḥānallāh! This statement serves as a powerful reminder to the soul. Saying "I am fasting" signifies a conscious choice - placing obedience to Allāh ﷻ above one's ego, and choosing reward over actions that would compromise the fast.

d) Avoiding the Socialisation Trap of Ramaḍān

While gathering with family and friends is exciting, Ramaḍān should never become a month where nights are consumed entirely by socialising, entertainment, useless conversations, excessive laughter and late-night gatherings.

Dearest readers, such actions can quietly erode the nūr of the Qur’ān, weaken one's du‘ā’, and diminish the spiritual impact of one's ‘ibādah.

The early generations feared wasting Ramaḍān more than any other month. They understood that missed Ramaḍāns never return, and that such beautiful opportunities are not guaranteed next year.

e) Moderation at Iftār and Avoiding Waste

One of the great contradictions of Ramaḍān today is that a month meant to teach restraint, simplicity, and humility has become associated with excess - lavish iftārs and suḥūr, overeating, and food wastage.

The sad reality is that all of the above occurs at the expense of our spiritual growth in Ramaḍān. Allāh ﷻ warns:

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

"Eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Indeed, He does not love those who are excessive." (Sūrah al-A‘rāf 7:31)

Moderation at iftār is an act of gratitude but also a discipline to our souls. A simple iftār revives the Sunnah, protects the body, and softens the heart.

Wasting food while others go hungry especially in the world we live in with millions starving, contradicts the very essence of fasting.

f) Remembering the Poor and Less Fortunate

True fasting creates empathy. Hunger reminds us of those who live with it daily - not by choice, but because of the selfishness of humankind, our greed. This awareness should translate into generosity, compassion, and increased charity. The Prophet ﷺ was described as:

"The most generous of people, and he was even more generous in Ramaḍān." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: 3554)

A fast that does not increase mercy and generosity is a fast that has not fully reached the heart.

2) Ādāb of the Masjid in Ramaḍān

a) The Sanctity of the House of Allāh ﷻ

The Masjid is not merely a gathering space; it is the house of Allāh ﷻ, a place sanctified by prayer, Qur'ān, and remembrance. Entering the masjid requires awareness and respect.

The masjid has a divine purpose - and our behavior within it must align with that purpose.

b) Lowering Voices and Avoiding Distractions

The Masājid during Ramaḍān are filled with the recitation of the Qur'ān, Tarāwīḥ, and du'ā'. Raising voices unnecessarily, engaging in conversations, and allowing distractions to persist - particularly through mobile phones - disrupt not only the worship of others but one's own 'ibādah as well. Indeed, causing disturbance in the worship of others is a serious matter for which one will be held accountable. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"إِنَّ هَذِهِ الْمَسَاجِدَ لَا تَصْلُحُ لَشَيْءٍ مِنْ هَذَا الْبُؤُولِ وَلَا الْقَذَرِ إِنَّمَا هِيَ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَقِرَاءَةِ الْقُرْآنِ"

"These mosques are not the places meant for urine and filth, but are only for the remembrance of Allah, prayer and the recitation of the Qur'an". (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 285)

Phones should therefore be silenced, conversations kept to a minimum, and constant awareness maintained of those around us who are engaged in worship.

c) Respecting Those in Ṣalāh, Qur'ān, and Tarāwīḥ

Walking carelessly in front of those praying, stepping over people, or blocking rows demonstrates a lack of Adab. Each worshipper has come seeking closeness to Allāh ﷻ, and disrupting that is a serious matter. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"If the one who passes in front of a person who is praying knew the burden of sin he bears, it would be better for him to stand for forty than to pass in front of him." Abū al-Naḍr, one of the narrators, said: "I do not know whether he said forty days, months, or years." (Narrated by al-Bukhārī: 510 and Muslim: 507)

This etiquette extends beyond physical movement. It also includes refraining from criticising the ḥuffāḥ for minor slips, publicly pointing out mistakes, or constantly finding fault with the Imām's khuṭbah or reminders. These are moments of worship and humility, not platforms for judgment. Corrections, if genuinely needed, should be done privately, respectfully, and with wisdom.

Likewise, a troubling attitude has emerged where some people choose a masjid for Tarāwīḥ purely based on which one finishes the fastest. Tarāwīḥ is not a burden to be rushed through, but an opportunity to stand before Allāh ﷻ, to listen attentively to the Qur'ān, and to revive the nights of Ramaḍān. Seeking the shortest prayer over presence of heart and reverence undermines the spirit of this great act of worship.

d) Mindfulness During Crowded Nights

Crowded Ramaḍān nights test our patience and character. Pushing, claiming excessive space, or becoming irritated contradicts the very lessons Ramaḍān teaches.

Parking irresponsibly and without regard for others has become a serious and recurring issue around many Masājid. Such behaviour contradicts the very spirit of Ramaḍān, which teaches consideration, restraint, and care for others.

Parking illegally, blocking driveways, or causing inconvenience to residents and fellow worshippers is not merely discourteous; it constitutes harm, and causing harm to others is a serious sin.

It is noteworthy that when visiting shopping centres or other public places, people generally observe parking rules and regulations. Yet, when attending the Masjid, some feel justified in parking unlawfully, blocking private property, or disregarding the rights of others. This behaviour has led to serious consequences, including complaints and, in some cases, the closure of Masājid.

To prevent such outcomes, worshippers must ensure that they park legally and responsibly. If a Masjid is known to become crowded, arriving earlier to secure lawful parking is part of good ādāb. Rushing in late and causing harm to others in the process undermines the very purpose of attending the Masjid and contradicts the values Ramaḍān seeks to instil.

e) Teaching Children Masjid Manners with Mercy

Children belong in the Masjid, but they must be guided with gentleness. Scolding, humiliating, or shaming children can alienate them from the Masjid for life. But parents too have a responsibility to take care of them.

f) Cleanliness and Shared Responsibility

Leaving food, cups, and rubbish behind is not from the ādāb of the Masjid. Cleanliness is not someone else's job; it is a communal obligation. The Prophet ﷺ was asked:

قُلْتُ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ عَلَّمَنِي شَيْئًا أَتُفَعُّ بِهِ قَالَ " اَعْرِضِ الْأَدَى عَنْ طَرِيقِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ "

"Abū Barzah reported: I said, "Allāh's Messenger, teach me something by which I may benefit." He said, "Remove the harmful object from the paths of the Muslims." (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 2618a)

Cleaning the Masjid, restoring order, and respecting shared spaces are all acts of sadaqah.

g) A Brief Reminder on I'tikāf

I'tikāf reminds us that the heart sometimes needs withdrawal from the world to fully reconnect with Allāh ﷻ. Ramaḍān invites moments of intentional seclusion with Allāh ﷻ - free from noise and distraction. Take full advantage of this opportunity.

3) Ādāb of Hospitality in Ramaḍān

a) Hosting for the Sake of Allāh

Hospitality in Ramaḍān is an act of worship when done sincerely. However, it loses its blessing when driven by showing off, competition, or social pressure. Allāh ﷻ says:

وَيُطْعَمُونَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

“And they give food - despite their desire for it - to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, ‘saying to themselves,’ ‘We feed you only for the sake of Allāh, seeking neither reward nor thanks from you.’” (Sūrah al-Insān 76:8–9)

b) Simplicity preserves sincerity

Keeping Food Simple and Stress-Free will allow you to still have time for worship and various forms of ‘ibādah. Extravagant preparation often leads to exhaustion and distraction from worship. A simple ifṭār revives the Sunnah and allows hosts to focus on prayer and remembrance.

The Prophet ﷺ lived simply, even at moments of great virtue.

c) Being Mindful of Prayer Times

Hospitality must never cause delay or negligence in ṣalāh. Hosts should facilitate prayer, and guests should be cooperative and aware. The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ صَلَاتُهُ

“The first matter that the servant will be brought to account for on the Day of Judgment is the prayer.” (Sunan al-Tirmidhī: 413)

Guests should be mindful of not overstaying and causing inconvenience to the host family. The Prophet ﷺ instructed moderation and consideration in social interactions, valuing people’s comfort and boundaries.

d) Gratitude and Avoiding Criticism

Criticising food, comparing hosts, or engaging in gossip during gatherings removes barakah. Gratitude, even for little, brings divine increase.

The Prophet ﷺ never criticised food; if he liked it, he ate, and if not, he left it.

e) Upholding Segregation and Modesty

Most importantly, the rulings of segregation must be upheld, especially among extended families where non-maḥrams are present. Comfort, culture, or familiarity do not override the commands of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ states in Sūrah al-Nūr, verses 30 and 31, the essence of which is that believing men and believing women have been commanded to lower their gaze and to guard their chastity.

Preserving modesty protects hearts, families, and the sanctity of Ramaḍān. Obedience to Allāh ﷻ always takes precedence over social ease.

Conclusion

Ramaḍān comes to teach us how to live beyond Ramaḍān. Fasting teaches restraint and the power of self determination.

Masājīd teach reverence, and its hospitality teaches generosity and removes greed. When ādāb are observed, ordinary actions become extraordinary acts of worship.

May Allāh ﷻ allow us to experience Ramaḍān not only through hunger and gatherings, but through transformed hearts, refined character, and lasting taqwā. Āmīn.

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