

Before any event, preparations are made. In proportion to the event are the preparations. If it is a small event, then perhaps the preparations will commence a few days before and it will involve a few individuals. If it is a worldwide event, then preparations will commence weeks, rather months in advance and will involve many people.

Likewise, we will witness, if Allah *subhanahu wa Ta'ala* wills, such a grand, magnificent event that preparations have commenced for it an entire year in advance. Jannah is prepared and beautified by Allah *subhanahu wa Ta'ala* the entire year for the moment when its doors will be flung open on the first night of Ramadaan. Such a great month that leave alone man, the entire creation of Allah *subhanahu wa Ta'ala* is mobilised for it. The fish in the ocean make dua for the fasting person (Musnad Ahmad). The angels in the heaven make dua for their forgiveness.

Precisely for this reason, Nabi *salallahu alahi wasallam* declared this month as *`azeem* (great) *mubaarak* (blessed) (Ibn Khuzaymah). It is a month in which Allah *subhanahu wa Ta'ala* engulfs His creation in His *rahmah*. The excellence of this month has been encapsulated in the following words of Rasulullah *salallahu alahi wasallam* as reported by Abu Masood *radhiyallahu unhu*:

لو يعلم العباد ما رمضان لتمنت أمتي ان تكون السنة كلها رمضان

“Had my Ummah only knew the true value of Ramadaan, they would have desired that the entire year be Ramadaan” (Ibn Khuzaymah)

Nabi *salallahu alahi wasallam* would make dua to be allowed to witness the month of Ramadaan from the time the crescent of Rajab would be sighted. O Allah! Bless us in Rajab and Sha`baan and allow us to witness the month of Ramadaan (Tabarani). He *salallahu alahi wasallam* would also make the following dua: O Allah! Safeguard me for the month of Ramadaan and guard the month of Ramadaan for me (that I attain the maximum blessings of this month) (Tabarani). Imaam Suyuti (*Rahimahullah*), a renowned Shafi` scholar narrates in Ad Durrul Manthoor from Mualla bin Fadhl: The pious people of the past would begin making dua to witness the month of Ramadaan six months in advance!

What can we do in preparation for Ramadaan?

Firstly, fulfil all obligations that are outstanding towards people whether it be of a monetary nature or anything else.

Secondly, try and programme ourselves in such a way that we have minimum work in Ramadaan and maximum time to dedicate to Allah *subhanahu wa Ta'ala*. Thirdly, draw up for ourselves a programme, deciding how we will utilise our time fruitfully during the Mubarak month of mercy.

Lastly, try and increase our time spent in the pleasure of Allah I so that we are ready to receive this great month.

May Allah I grant us the best of this month and shower us with his mercy and forgiveness. Aameen.