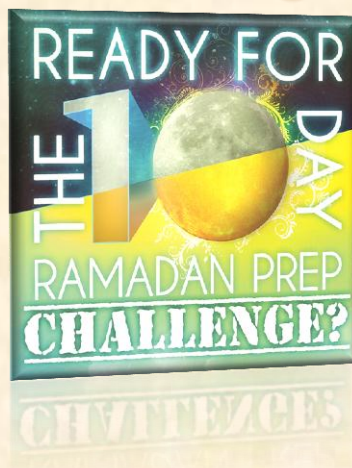


Let it Change You!

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Summarized by: Sister S.T.

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My dear brothers and sisters, I would like in the beginning to congratulate you for being committed to this program and listening to the lectures that have been given.

The Month of Change

Today I am going to talk about Ramaḍān being the month of change. Everything changes in Ramaḍān, starting from the heavens. The gates of Paradise will be wide open during the month of Ramaḍān. The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) told us that the gates of Jannah will be wide open, which means that there are so many good deeds done during this month that lead to Jannah. Many good deeds can be offered that lead to the different gates of Jannah because each gate is primarily called after a specific good deed. There is one gate called *Al-Rayyān*, and this gate is prepared for those who fast a lot. The middle gate of Jannah is for those who are good to their parents. There is another gate in Paradise for those who offer ṣalāh. There are so many good deeds and a variety of acts of worship during Ramaḍān, which is why all eight gates are wide open to welcome every Muslim who takes this month as an opportunity to come closer to Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta ‘āla*).

The gates of Hell will be closed because so many people will be forgiven and freed from the Hellfire. The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “In every single night in Ramaḍān, Allāh will free individuals from the Hellfire.” This means that in every night, Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta ‘āla*) will look at our deeds and accept from us and set us free from the Hellfire. Can you imagine your name being pronounced from Allāh? That Muhammad, Abdullah, Ahmed, Hafsa, Aisha, Anam, Hanaa, or whatever your name is, is announced and Allāh says that you are free from the Hellfire.

Don’t aim that your name is mentioned once. Try your best that every night Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta ‘āla*) mentions your name and will say “You deserve to be promised protection from Hellfire tonight.” Can you imagine yourself aiming that high during Ramaḍān? Imagine that for 29 or 30 nights Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta ‘āla*) will say, “So-and-so person is protected from the Hellfire and shall not face the Hellfire.” What a great honor.

It is a month of change. Even the head of the *shayāṭīn* will be chained during the month of Ramaḍān. There is a major change in the universe during this month. A lot of angels will descend during this month to earth. In the night of *laylat’l-qadr*, the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “The gates of the sky will be opened and a lot of angels will descend down to the earth. They never before came down to earth, and the number of these angels will be as much as the drops of

rain and stones on the earth.” There are millions and billions coming down to earth. This is a change and something unusual. These angels ask for your forgiveness and say *amīn* for your *du‘ā* and ask Allāh to accept your deeds. They will pray that Allāh accept, bless, multiply and purify your deeds. Can you imagine this change happening around you in the universe?

Not only that, even on the earth there is a lot of change that happens. Out of Allāh’s complete Wisdom, He put certain major incidents to fall in the month of Ramaḍān. This happens for a reason. So many great things have happened during the month of Ramaḍān.

‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib mentioned that in the month of Ramaḍān, ‘Īsa (*‘alayhi’l-salām*) was raised to the heavens. When Mūsa (*‘alayhi’l-salām*) led his people out of the Egypt to the Promised Land in Palestine and when he died, it was Ramaḍān. During the month of Ramaḍān, Allāh revealed the books to Ibrāhīm, Mūsa, and ‘Īsa. Ramaḍān is the month when the Qur’ān was revealed. The Qur’ān reshaped the history of humanity. Major changes have taken place during this month.

Ramaḍān and Islamic History

If you look at Islamic history, many events took place during the month of Ramaḍān. Some of the most important landmarks in our history happened in Ramaḍān, and it is the month of victory and change.

The Battle of Badr. The Muslims were able to make their first clear victory and rewrite the history of Arabia and show that Muslims are not a small, oppressed community.

The opening of Makkah. Makkah changed from being the capital of *shirk* and *kufṛ* and having 360+ idols around the Ka’bah to the city of monotheism until today. It happened during the month of Ramaḍān on the 8th year of the *hijrah*.

Expansion of the ummah. The Muslims reached so many lands during the month of Ramaḍān. They landed on the shores of Andalus. Muslims arrived far east and north of Turkey and to China and was part of the former Soviet Union.

Many enemies were defeated. The course of history was changed. The best example is the battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt where the Muslims defeated the Mongols in the 7th century *hijri*.

There is much to be said about the history of this month. One interesting incident took place during this month. For 20 years, the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) was trying to convince people to accept the message of Islam. The hardest day of the life of the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) was when he went to Ṭā’if to ask them to accept him as the Messenger of Allāh and to accept his message. He went to them offering himself and faced complete rejection. They humiliated him and threw stones at him. It was one of the hardest days not because of the treatment but because not one of them showed interest in accepting his *da’wah*, and he could not protect them from the Hellfire. After 20 years, the month of Ramaḍān changed their hearts, and they came to the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). The same people who had once said, “Allāh couldn’t find any better messenger to send to us? If you are truly the messenger, I will go to the Ka’bah and tear the cloth with my hand.” Another said, “Ya Muḥammad, if you are a true prophet from your Lord, then you are in a higher status than me and shouldn’t be talking to me. If you are a liar, which I think you are, then you are much lower in status and I won’t bother to waste my time with you.” These same people came to the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and said, “Ya Rasūlullāh, we want to accept Islam.”



Mughirah ibn Shu'bah saw these people when he was outside of Madīnah taking care of his sheep, and he was running to tell the Prophet (ﷺ) the good news. Abu Bakr asked him to let him be the one to relay the message to the Prophet (ﷺ) because he knew how happy the Prophet (ﷺ) would be to see them coming into Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ) was so happy that he himself ordered a special tent in the *masjid* and hosted them. He appointed 'Uthmān ibn Abi Al-'As to be in charge of this group based on the recommendation of Abu Bakr who said, "This is the person I saw among the group who cared so much about learning the Qur'ān and the religion, which is why I recommend him to be in charge of the group." What a great quality in this person. They came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him to teach them about Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ) fasted that month, and the people of Thaḳīf fasted with him. They used to come and talk to him every day after *ṣalāt-l-‘ishā'* about the stories of the people of Makkah. There was a lot of similarity in lineage and shared history. There were about 15-16 people from Thaḳīf who came as delegates to represent their people. The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered that when they go back to spread monotheism, and they asked, "What about our great lord who is Al-Lat?" One of them said, "Destroy Al-Lat? Do you know, ya Rasūlullāh, if he heard you saying that what Al-Lat will do to all of us?" 'Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb said, "You are so ignorant. You have just become Muslim. This is an idol who cannot do anything." They said, "We cannot do that." They were raised to honor the idol. They said, "If you want to destroy it, then send someone from your people to destroy it so that we are not in trouble with our people." The Prophet (ﷺ) sent Mughirah ibn Shu'bah and Khālīd ibn Walīd and Abu Sufyān. Mughirah ibn Shu'bah destroyed the idol.

The Prophet (ﷺ) lost so many people dear to him like Khadījah (*raḍyAllāhu ‘anha*) in the month of Ramaḍān. *Umm-l-mu'minīn* 'Ā'ishah (*raḍyAllāhu ‘anha*) in 58 AH passed away during the month of Ramaḍān. *Amīr-l-mu'minīn* 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib (*raḍyAllāhu ‘anhu*) was murdered in 40 AH during the month of Ramaḍān. Faṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ), passed away during Ramaḍān.

Inner Questions

Every one of these events marked a very important change during that period of time. The major question that we should ask ourselves today is: what is going to be changed in Ramaḍān 2011? What is going to change in your life? Will you change when it comes to your habits? What good habits are you going to adopt in the month of Ramaḍān? What are the bad habits you are going to get rid of in Ramaḍān? Our habits of eating, sleeping, and *'ibādah* happen during Ramaḍān, but is it a temporary or a real change? What other than this will be changed in your life?

What has changed during the month of Ramaḍān in your own life? What is going to change when it comes to your relationship with your parents? What is going to change when it comes to your relationship with your children? What is going to change when it comes to your relationship with your community? What is going to change when it comes to your relationship with the *masjid*? How is your relationship with Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta 'āla*) going to change? How is your relationship with your friends and neighbors going to change? Will it improve? Is there something wrong going on that you have to stop? There are so many things to be talked about, and we can't go over details for each point.



Your Relationship with Allāh

At the top of all of these is our relationship with Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*). Are we going to always be in contact with Allāh? When Allāh wants to talk to us, He sends to us the books. The Qur’ān is Allāh talking to us. When we want to talk to Allāh, we raise our hands and our hearts and our tongue starts supplicating and praising Allāh. Our attitude with *du‘ā’* has to change. Whenever you pray and raise your hands, the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) told us that those who don’t know Allāh during times of ease, then Allāh will not know them during times of hardship and calamity.

Instead of *du‘ā’* becoming just empty words that you say after *ṣalāh* without contemplating the meanings, it should change to be something very meaningful. Know every word that comes from your mouth and really mean it. This is when *du‘ā’* will be accepted. A lot of people make a lot of *du‘ā’* during Ramaḍān. What is the key for *du‘ā’* being accepted? *Du‘ā’*, in my opinion, is one of the key points that identifies your relationship with Allāh. How much do you make *du‘ā’*? How much do you raise your hands and turn to your Lord?

I know an old woman who was telling me about herself. I was once giving a lecture about *du‘ā’*, and she came to me with her eyes full of tears and she said, “Shaykh, me and *du‘ā’* are a different story. If anything happens, I turn to Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) and always ask Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*). Sometimes it is amazing that the first thing that comes to my mind is asking Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*). For example, we are in the airport and our bags did not come to be collected in the right place, and my husband said we should go file a report for our missing bags, and before that I said, ‘Ya Allāh, protect my bags,’ and I would ask Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) to help me. *Wallāhi*, I would hear the noise of the belt again and would see my bag coming out.”

The hadith of Jabir says that the companions would pray *istikhārah* all the time. They would ask Allāh even in the simplest things. It really identifies how much you rely on Allāh. When you do a program or prepare something, stand up in the middle of the night to ask Allāh to give *barakah* and bless your effort. We all take the necessary means, but the question is: how much emphasis do you put on *du ‘ā’* ? If you want to identify your relationship with Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*), know how much you know of His Names and Attributes.

One-third of the Qur’ān is about Allāh and His Names and His Attributes. It is to focus on the greatness of His Names and Attributes. Why do you think this is for? It is about time to change the attitude towards Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ‘āla*) and to know Him more. You cannot know someone more unless you know his names and attributes. How much do you know about His Names? Take out a piece of paper and write down every Name that you know. See how many of them are right Names versus wrong. See how many you know the meaning of. Do you know 15? 30? He has more than 100 Names in the Qur’ān. After you have written this list, ask yourself how many of these Names you use in your *du ‘ā’* .

One way to identify your relationship with Allāh is your relationship with the Qu’ran. Since last Ramaḍān, how many extra verses have you memorized? How many *sūrah*s have you memorized? If you don’t speak Arabic, I understand that it is very hard, but I don’t understand how it has been an entire year and you did not make progress with a single verse or a single small *sūrah*? There is



something wrong here and the language is not an excuse. How much time and effort have you put into this?

One of the early Muslim scholars said that he spend 18,000 *dīnārs* in learning ‘ilm. How much time and effort and money have you dedicated to the Qur’ān? It is at the bottom of our priority list. If you want to identify your relationship with Allāh, see when you stand before Him how much love, respect, honor, and concentration you have in your *ṣalāh*. See how close or far you are from Allāh. Believe me, just thinking about it is terrifying because if you are far from Allāh today, then I’m afraid you will also be far away from Him tomorrow.

A Month for Change

I can go on and on with your relationship with the Prophet, the religion, and how much you know and how much you choose to learn and how much effort you put in and your relationship with your spouse, parents and children. Think about this. It must be a month that must mark a major change. What are the things you will decide on this month to take on? Definitely on your relationship with Allāh and with human beings. See where you lack the most. Is it your relationship with your parents? Is it your relationship with your spouse? Is it your relationship with your children? Are we going to stop the violence in our house that our kids are listening to and watching? Are we going to change the language that we use with each other at home? Are we going to replace the fear with love? Your children and spouse should not fear you as much as love you and look forward to doing what you want. Are you in the business of winning people’s hearts or controlling others, even if they are your children or spouse?

I’m going to change my attitude with my community. Instead of just being a customer expecting to be served, change your attitude to be a partner and to build. Be a partner who welcomes new members to the community and a partner who is willing to work and cooperate in the organization. When I go to sleep and think of myself and my family, do I think of us as part of the community or not? The success of my brothers is the success of me. Before I start any program, I should ask if this program will contribute to strengthening our community or not. We should be in the business of building and completing one another and not beating one another.

Brothers and sisters, this is the month of change. When we think about the end of our lives, what legacy are we going to leave behind us? Have you ever thought about leaving a legacy behind you? Do you think you are a person worth that? You need to change how you look at yourself. Do you know the difference between fame and greatness? Fame is always about what you gain in life, but greatness is about what you give in life. Do you want to be famous or do you want to be a great person? Greatness is always based upon what you give and not what you gain. Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta ‘āla*) said, “You are the greatest nation that was ever brought out to people.” This greatness is because of what they give and not what they gain. Your greatness will come out of how much you contribute and how much you give to your society and community at large.

How to Maintain Change

I will conclude my talk today with very practical points on how you can maintain this change. You may be excited and full of enthusiasm about making a change. We all have this, especially in the beginning of Ramaḍān, but how can you really achieve that change you want?



1. Identify your goals and make them very clear.

If you don't know where you want to go and just travel, then most likely you are going to end up somewhere else and not where you want. If you don't identify point A to point B, then you will never reach B. The first step is to identify your goals clearly.

2. Be excited about a new goal that you set for yourself.

Do not start things which are going to be boring. It should be something you love to do.

3. Have the right reasons.

Contemplate and think about the reasons why you want to achieve your goal. Is it really because of you or because of pressure around you? Is it because you are 100% convinced or because it is the culture or religion? Come up with five to six convincing reasons which lead you to make this change.

4. Don't ever let the challenges of life bury you alive.

Don't let the problems you see prevent you from reaching the goals you want. If you are a youth and facing a lot of challenges, make sure that these challenges are the reasons for you to be successful. Use these obstacles to make you a successful person.

There is a nice story I heard from the people who live in the south. In the south, we have a type of fish called codfish, which are from the north, and they were brought frozen to the south in the old days. People would bring them in containers where thousands were put, and when they arrived, they would be tasteless. One of the shippers made an interesting invention. He put catfish in the container, which are the natural predators of the codfish. The entire trip, the codfish were alert and in constant movement and on the defensive, which kept them fresh and strong the entire trip.

Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ʿāla*) sometimes drops catfish in your life to keep you strong, alive, always alert, and to help you grow. It is not to destroy you and not to put you down and not to prevent you from prevailing. These challenges in life are meant to make you stronger. The more you are able to resist this pressure in life, the more valuable a person you will become. Have you looked at the difference between coal and the black diamond, which is the most expensive rock? They are from the same source, and the only difference is the structure of the diamond is meant to resist pressure while the structure of coal is not meant to resist pressure and it can be crushed with your hand. The ability to resist pressure makes the diamond valuable. It is your ability to resist pressure that will make you a valuable person.

I want you to come to the challenges in life and start Ramaḍān and start aiming towards these goals while you are full of trust that you are the person who can achieve these goals and will make this change happen. If you live with this spirit while keeping your head up, you try to be the best. If you live your life like this, then I guarantee that you will get your goals because there is nobody who can defeat you from inside except yourself and unless you give up.

My brothers and sisters, I wish you all the best from the bottom of my heart. I ask Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta ʿāla*) to help me and to help all of you to make this Ramaḍān the real month of change where things will go in a better direction. We pray a lot and ask Allāh to change things,



especially when somebody is going through a hardship. A very interesting point to contemplate on is that so many times we ask Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta'āla*) to change our circumstances but you never ask yourself why Allāh has made these circumstances and why Allāh put us in these circumstances. Do you know the answer? Allāh will not change your circumstances until you change yourself. We pray so much, but we are not praying for changing ourselves, which is the point and why Allāh put you in that circumstance. The moment you change, things will change around you, so mark Ramaḍān 2011 as a month that will be remembered for years to come by you and your family and *inshā'Allāh* by your community as well.

Sh. Waleed Basyouni – Day 8 @ RamadanPrep.com

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