

Exams and Ramadan: How Can You Make the Best of Both?

We are once again in that blessed time of the year– mosques are cleaned, delicious food is stockpiled at home, and there is a gentle hum of anticipation in the air. This can only mean the advent of Ramadan, the annual gift bestowed upon us by Allah ﷻ. Whilst some are busy making exciting preparations and competitively discussing how many times they will finish reading the Qur'an, others are left with an understandable knot in their stomachs – **how will I get the most out of Ramadan whilst dealing with exams?**

I've put together some tips below to help you prepare yourself mentally and practically to deal with Ramadan and your exams and make sure you're not stressing out about making the most of either of them:

1. Be Grateful. It may not seem like it, but you are one of the lucky ones.

"The greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When Allah ﷻ loves a people, He tests them. Whoever accepts that wins His ﷻ pleasure but whoever is discontent with that earns His ﷻ wrath." [Ibn Majah]

Allah ﷻ through His infinite mercy is constantly providing opportunities for His slaves to elevate their status. Exams in Ramadan will undoubtedly be difficult, but your burden should be seen as a testament to Allah's mercy and His will to ensure that you in particular bring out your true potential and capability to succeed.

2. Know That You Can Handle It

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope." [Qur'an: Chapter 2, Verse 286]

Again, your exams are a testament to the favours bestowed upon you in this sacred month! Allah ﷻ has created you and has also equipped you with the necessary skills, physique and mentality to conquer this mammoth task. You are blessed with abilities not granted to everybody.

3. Embrace Your Challenge

No one said it will be easy, but don't be prepared to settle for anything less than your best. Muslims should strive for perfection in all aspects of life and Ramadan is not an excuse for less than 100% effort. Moreover, it is a chance to excel and be blessed with a higher echelon in this life and the next.

Begin today by taking stock of how much revision you have done and how much you still have to do. This is not a 'quick 5 minute exercise'. Meticulously scrutinise and plan how you will use the remaining time before your exams to prepare for them. Are there areas where you struggle and will need to dedicate more hours to that particular topic? Are you sufficiently prepared for the exam? What else can you do? Have you sought guidance from senior students who have already sat the exam? Have you practised on past papers? Have you discussed how you can boost your grade with your teacher? This is the precious time that you will wish you spent more wisely if during the examination you have a sweat on your brow!

4. Work Hard, Work Smart

Start revising early! Work hard and work smart. **Waiting until the night before an exam to start revising causes stress, usually provides insufficient time and you fail to reach your potential allowing for mistakes and panic to enter the exam room with you – not what you need for a Ramadan exam**

Sleep as early as possible after taraweeh and add in naps to your daytime timetable, you will need to keep your mind fresh and sharp for the exam.

If slumber overtakes you during revision or your eyes are feeling heavy, **take a productive break**. Recite a page from the Qur'an, perform dhikr in silence to the beat of your own heart, or even listen to a recitation of the Qur'an

Don't bury your head in the books just before you enter. This can cause panic and is counterproductive. Yes you may see a new fact that you previously didn't know, but not only do you not memorise this new point but your panic makes you perform worse than you would otherwise.

Try to avoid discussing the exam after it has finished. Nothing will change on the exam paper and you will be left until results day, wishing you had put a different answer to the one you wrote. Rather, unwind and relax your nerves by glorifying and thanking Allah ﷻ for helping you get through.

5. Nutrition

Having a wholesome suhoor (pre-dawn meal) is more than vital. **Those that don't eat breakfast cannot function at the same level as those that do.** Choose foods that break down gradually and provide energy throughout the day for your suhoor and iftaar meals. At iftaar, don't pile the fatty food down your gullet. This is against the sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ and will only increase your fatigue, making taraweeh and waking up for suhoor very difficult.

Finally, the month of Ramadan is the most blessed of all months. When the exams are finished and have been sent away for marking, remember that as a Muslim you still have left in your arsenal your most powerful weapon for your success – dua.