

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF AN ACCEPTED RAMADAN?

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Question: What's a Sign That my Ramadān was Accepted?

When one completes an 'Ibādah, it's good to pause and reflect as to whether he's among the winners or losers. It was mentioned that 'Ali رضي الله عنه, and also Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, used to say at the end of Ramadān, “*Whose deeds are accepted so we can congratulate him? And who were those who were deprived, so we can console him?*” A sign of an accepted Ramadān — and this is not just pertaining to Ramadān, it pertains to the other various 'Ibādāt, and it's not one sign, it's many signs — one of the signs is making Du'ā that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى accepts your 'Ibādah. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى does not reject such sincere Du'ā after an 'Ibādah is completed. Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali mentioned that Mu'allah Ibn Al-Fadhli stated that they used to make Du'ā for six months after Ramadān that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى accepts their Ramadān.

كانوا يدعون الله ستة أشهر أن يبلغهم رمضان، ثم يدعونه ستة أشهر أن يتقبل منهم

Even though that statement doesn't specify it was the Sahābah and it's mentioned with no chain, that concept is accurate. The Salaf used to make Du'ā that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى accepts their deeds. Makhūl and Yahyā Ibn Abi Kathīr Al-Yamām At-Tā'i used to make Du'ā pertaining to Ramadān:

اللَّهُمَّ سَلِّمْ لِي رَمَضَانَ وَسَلِّمْ رَمَضَانَ لِي وَتَسَلِّمْهُ مِنِّي مُتَقَبَّلًا

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General Ahādīth support asking Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to accept an 'Ibādah that you perform. The Messenger ﷺ — The Messenger ﷺ! — would ask Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to accept his deeds.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا وَرِزْقًا طَيِّبًا وَعَمَلًا مُتَقَبَّلًا

*O Allah, I ask you for beneficial knowledge, goodly provision, and accepted deeds.*¹

When Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and Ismā'il عليه السلام were doing the mighty task of raising the foundation of the Ka'bah by an order from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, they asked that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى accepts from them.

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

*And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing."*²

Making Du'ā that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى accepts the deed that your performed after you completed it is a sign of the deed being accepted inshā'Allāh.

And another sign of a deed or an 'Ibādah being accepted or of Ramadān being accepted is actually asking this question. No matter how sincere and in accordance one feels his 'Ibādah was, no matter how mighty it is, even if it's giving his life for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, one should always feel poor to the Mercy of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and one should always fear that their 'Ibādah may not

¹ Ibn Mājah: 925

² [2:127]

be accepted. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى praised those who do 'Ibādāt and deeds and, at the same time, fear that their deeds may not be accepted, so it's a sign of the deed being accepted, because you're praised by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ

And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful because they will be returning to their Lord.³

A praise to those who do deeds, while their hearts are full of fear, whether those deeds were accepted or not. Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها asked the Messenger ﷺ about that verse. She said, *“Is that verse about those who commit sins, like drink alcohol and steal and commit adultery?”* The Messenger ﷺ said, *“No, daughter of the Siddīq! They're the ones who do good deeds. The ones who fast and give charity and make Salāh, but they fear that those deeds will not be accepted.”*

وَلَكِنَّهُ الرَّجُلُ يُصُومُ وَيَتَصَدَّقُ وَيُصَلِّي وَهُوَ يَخَافُ أَنْ لَا يَتَّخِذَ مِنْهُ

Rather it is a man who fasts and gives charity and prays, but he fears that those will not be accepted from him.⁴

Fearing that your Ramadān, Hajj, or Jihād, or any 'Ibādah is not going to be accepted is a mighty sign of its acceptance inshā'Allāh.

Another sign is the deed, that accepted deed, being followed with other deeds. Accepted deeds are pregnant with more deeds. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said,

³ [23:60]

⁴ Ibn Mājah: 4198

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى

As for he who gives and fears Allāh

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى

And believes in the best [reward],

فَسَنِّيئِرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى

We will ease him toward ease.⁵

Those who give in charity and have Taqwā and believe in the Husnā,

فَسَنِّيئِرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى

We will ease him toward ease.⁶

Some of the Salaf said *فَسَنِّيئِرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى* means the reward for a good deed, for an accepted deed, is performing other good deeds following that one. A deed is like a seed that you plant. You plant that seed, and it becomes a tree by the will of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى — the tree being the accepted deed. The tree produces more seeds as a means of reproduction. Accepted 'Ibādāt, accepted deeds, reproduce

⁵ [92:5-7]

⁶ [92:7]

and shed more deeds as an early reward and sign from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Many verses indicate this.

وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى

And Allāh increases those who were guided, in guidance,⁷

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَاتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ

And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.⁸

When one does an accepted 'Ibādah, a second 'Ibādah comes and says, “Do me,” and a third 'Ibādah comes and says, “Do me,” and a fourth one says, “Come and do me.” If Allāh سبحانه وتعالى accepts an 'Ibādah from you, He'll facilitate other unexpected 'Ibādāt that will come to you from ways you never perceived, and He'll keep you away from sins even if they come close to you.

Let the limbs that did 'Ibādāt in Ramadān follow with more 'Ibādāt after Ramadān. Don't let the eyes that shed tears in Ramadān in fear and in hope of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, in Du'ā and in recitation of the Qur'ān — don't use them for Harām after Ramadān. The feet that walk to obedience to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and stood in obedience to Allāh in Ramadān, don't use them for Harām after Ramadān. The tongue that recited in Ramadān and did Adhkār and 'Ibādah and Du'ā, don't use it for slander and backbiting after Ramadān. One who fasted Ramadān then followed it with sister deeds, like for example, the six days of Shawwāl, that's inshā'Allāh a sign of an accepted Ramadān.

⁷ [19:76]

⁸ [47:17]

After an accepted Ramadān, one will feel the need to fast, for example, every Monday and Thursday all year long. After an accepted Ramadān, one doesn't stop Qiyām Al-Layl, rather he continues the Qiyām all year long. He continues with daily recitation of the Qur'ān all year long. Or he used to slander or backbite, he stopped it in Ramadān — he doesn't go back to it after Ramadān. Accepted deeds, accepted 'Ibādāt, an accepted Ramadān, yearns and cries and shouts for sister deeds after it. From the mercy and grace of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is that when He accepts a deed, He opens gates to follow up 'Ibādāt in deeds to honor that servant and to bring him closer to him in the Dunyā and in the Ākhirah.

Another sign of Ramadān and 'Ibādāt being accepted is that one sees the deeds as something minor, no matter how much one exerts of effort in the 'Ibādah, he sees it as something minor. The Sahābah sacrificed their souls cheaply for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and never got conceited. In fact, they wished that they could give more. If you worshipped Allāh سبحانه وتعالى every millisecond of Ramadān — you didn't slumber or sleep, you performed back-to-back 'Ibādāt — never let vanity or conceit get to you, because that rendered deeds fruitless and in vain. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى ordered the Messenger,

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ

O you who covers himself [with a garment],

قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ

Arise and warn.

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ

And your Lord glorify.

وَتِيَابِكَ فَطَهِّرْ

And your clothing purify.

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ

And keep away from Ar-Rujz (the idols)!

وَلَا تَمُنُّ بِتَسَكُّرٍ

And give not a thing in order to have more (or consider not your deeds of obedience to Allāh as a favor to Him).⁹

From the moment that was revealed to the Messenger ﷺ, he ﷺ did back-to-back Da'wah, 'Ibādah, and Jihād and he had patience throughout all that among the other various 'Ibādāt and deeds that he did. Pride, arrogance, vanity never crept into his blessed, pure heart ﷺ despite the mighty deeds that he had undertaken. The more deeds a believer is blessed by Allāh تعالى سبحانه to perform, the more it humbles him to Allāh تعالى سبحانه and that's an indication of their acceptance. In those verses [starting with] يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ, Allāh تعالى سبحانه then says, وَلَا تَمُنُّ بِتَسَكُّرٍ. Some Mufassirīn, including Al-Hasan Al-Basri, said it means لَا تَمُنُّ بِعَمَلِكَ تَسَكُّرًا عَلَى رَبِّكَ, "Don't think with your deeds you have a favor over Allāh تعالى سبحانه."

Another sign of an accepted Ramadān is following it up with Istighfār. Istighfār is an established 'Ibādah after many 'Ibādāt. After the Fard Salāh, it's Sunnah to say Astaghfirullāh. After Qiyām Al-Layl, it's a Sunnah.

وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ

⁹ [74:1-6]

and those who seek forgiveness before dawn.¹⁰

In the other verse,

وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness...¹¹

After Hajj — after Hajj! — when one is pure and free from sins as pure and free as the day that his mother gave birth to him, it's still Sunnah to do Istighfār.

ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ

Then depart from the place from where [all] the people depart and ask forgiveness of Allāh.¹²

Istighfār is an abandoned Sunnah after the recitation of the Qur'ān. After the recitation of the Qur'ān, it's Mustahabb to say,

سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ اسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ

O Allāh, You are free from every imperfection; praise be to You. There is no deity worthy of worship except You; I ask Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance

¹⁰ [3:17]

¹¹ [51:18]

¹² [2:199]

استغفرك وأتوب إليك is Istighfār. We all have shortcomings when we do our deeds and 'Ibādāt. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said,

فَأَسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ

*So take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness.*¹³

Allāh ordered Istiqāmah. Istiqāmah is obedience to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. He said فَاسْتَقِيمُوا — He ordered obedience — and then He said to do Istighfār. What's the relationship between the two? There are always shortcomings in obedience, so Allāh سبحانه وتعالى blessed us with Istighfār as a form of reparation for our shortcomings in our obedience and in our worship to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Istighfār transforms the deficiency in an 'Ibādah, in a deed, in Ramadān into a complete deed. Istighfār after an 'Ibādah removes any arrogance, conceit, and vanity from the worshipper's heart after performing that 'Ibādah. It humbles one. When righteous believers perform deeds and their deeds increase, Istighfār needs to increase as well. One may think it's the opposite but that's not true. When the deeds increase, the Istighfār increases. The more Istighfār that follows a deed, the more likeness that that deed is an accepted one. May Allāh سبحانه وتعالى keep you steadfast on Tawhīd. May Allāh سبحانه وتعالى accept your fasting, your Qiyām and all your 'Ibādāt. May Allāh سبحانه وتعالى make you among those whose necks are free from Jahannam and may Allāh سبحانه وتعالى grant you the blessing of many more Ramadāns to come.

وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم

¹³ [41:6]