

Prepare yourself with Mujahada during the Month of Shaban January 23, 2026

Warabbuke yakhluqu ma yashaa u wayakhter ma kana lehumul khiyara subhana Allahi wataAAala AAamma yushrikoona Surah al-Qasas 28:68

Your Lord creates and chooses as He pleases: the choice is not theirs: Glory to Allah and far is He above the partners they ascribe to Him

Everything in existence, every place, moment, and living creature, is created by Allah. While all is His, He has designated certain things with special virtue and honor. Ultimately, He selects what is most beneficial for us, for His knowledge surpasses our own.

As for certain months, as we discussed before, the months of Rajab, Shaban and Ramadan are chosen as the special months, when Allah's Mercy flows in abundance. The month of Rajab has just passed. It was a season to turn to the path of repentance. It was an opportunity to cleanse our hearts from crude and coarse conducts which had covered our hearts like weeds. It was an opportunity for cultivating and plowing, to clear away the weeds and to prepare our hearts, to ready them for the planting of the seeds of beautiful actions: ameli salih.

We also celebrated one of the most significant nights in our calendar: Laylatul Miraj, the Night of Ascension in the month of Rajab. Now, Rajab is a memory. As the saying goes: *Yesterday is a dream, and tomorrow is but a hope; only today is truly ours.* We must carry the lessons of the past without betting our survival on a future of uncertainties. Every month brings new opportunities. We are now in the month of Shaban, another beautiful month, and we have another opportunity to prepare ourselves for the month of Ramadan and receive Allah's Mercy. Rajab is the month of repentance; Shaban is the month of loving affection. Rajab was the month of sowing good character; Shaban is the month of watering, watering the love of Allah and Rasulallah (saws).

The month of Shaban is often described as a neglected spiritual period, based on a narration from Usamha bin Zaid (ra), who asked: "Oh messenger of God, I do not see you fasting any months as much as Shaban." He responded, "This is a month that people neglect between Rajab and Ramadan, although it is a month in which actions are presented to the Lord of the Universes, and I love that my deeds be presented to the Lord of the universes while I am in a state of fasting." Scholars emphasize that the

most profound way to distinguish oneself before Allah is to remain vigilant and heedful when others are heedless. Ibn Al Jawzi (ks) said that reaching out to Allah when others are less likely to be doing so is the evidence of your insistence upon doing good. For example, the companions would particularly ensure that they made time for dhikr between Maghrib and Isha, a time each day in which many people were busy and neglectful in remembrance. In addition, Rasulallah (saws) kept many of his deeds between himself and His Lord. Keeping your deeds between you and Allah is an indication of ihsan, spiritual excellence and the performance of beautiful deeds.

The month of Shaban is preparing us for the month of Ramadan. Shaban is the field where we plant our seeds so that we may harvest during Ramadan. It is a season of preparation, allowing us to build the momentum needed to strive wholeheartedly for the sake of Allah once Ramadan arrives.

Ramadan is a journey toward true liberation: a time to break the shackles of the ego from the slavery of this world, and to realize that freedom is not the ability to do whatever we want. We find freedom not in the absence of desire, but in the mastery of it. By resisting unbounded ambition and silencing unjustified fears, we reclaim control over our hearts. Freedom is not free, it demands continuous striving, continuous mujahada. Mujahada is striving, requiring that we close the door of ease and open the door of difficulty; we close the door of comfort and laziness, and open the door of effort; we close the door of sleep and heedlessness, and open the door of wakefulness; we close the door of arrogance, and open the door of humility; we close the door of imagination and open the door of reality. Mujahada is the greater Jihad.

Allah-u Ta'ala says in Surah Ankabut: "Those who strive for us, we will certainly guide them in Our ways; God is with the doers of good." Hence, guidance comes with mujahada, striving. The more we resist the temptations of the lower self, the more guidance we are promised to receive. In Surah an-Najm, Allah-u Ta'ala warned us that we will have nothing but what we strive for. This is the time to prepare ourselves for mujahada.

Shaban is also the time to purify our wealth and our hearts from the attachments of worldly possessions. There is a medication from the divine pharmacy to cleanse our hearts from material attachments called zakat. It is a pillar of our faith. It is an act of worship that brings a Muslim closer to God, fulfilling a divine command mentioned alongside prayer (Salah) in the Qur'an. Just as prayer is intended to purify the heart from spiritual impurities and worldly distractions, zakat is intended to purify one's wealth and heart from greed and selfishness. In the Qur'an, the commands, "Establish

prayer and give zakat" appear together in approximately thirty verses. This constant pairing highlights that they are considered a unified requirement for true faith. Zakat does not reduce our wealth; on the contrary, it ensures the growth and blessing (*barakah*) of one's wealth. The Prophet Muhammed (saws) said, "Protect your wealth by giving zakat." Zakat frees us from being a slave to our possessions and grants us true liberty.

Let us enter Ramadan with our hearts purified: through fasting, prayer, and sincere repentance. If you have broken a heart, mend it; if you owe a debt, pay it. Ensure your zakat reaches those in need while there is still time. There are many needy Muslim brothers, sisters and children who are waiting for our help at a time when they are abandoned by the rich and wealthy nations, who claim to be the protectors of freedom, while they remain shackled by their own egos, arrogance and worldly possessions.

Yurdaer Al Latif Al Jerrahi