



Illustrated Islamic Jurisprudence for the Acts of Worship

Simplifying and Teaching the Rules of Islam

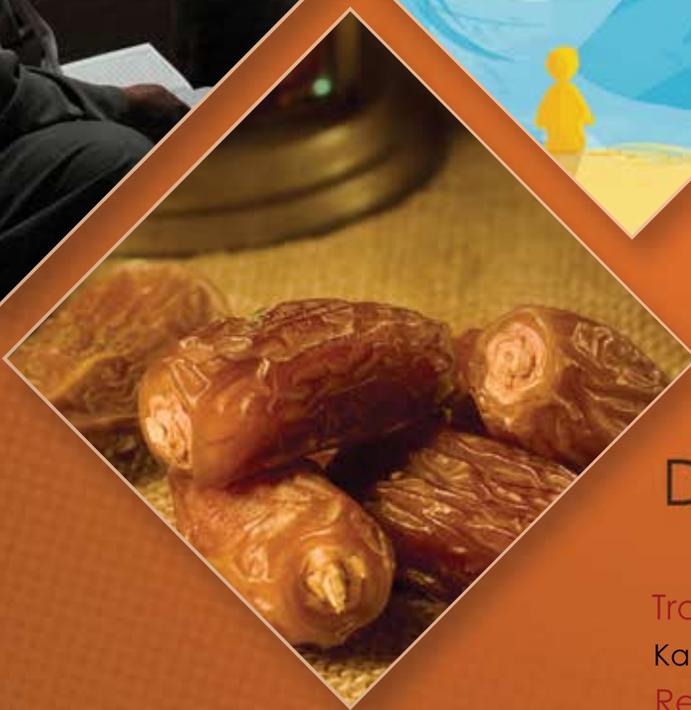
At-Tahara

As-Salāh

As-Saum

Az- Zakah

Al-Hajj



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Translation

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Fasting (sawm): Its Rulings and Merits

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Fasting (Saum): Its Rulings and Merits

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Merits of Fasting

“O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may be pious. [Observing Saum (fasts)] for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days. And as for those who fast with difficulty (e.g. an old man, etc.), they have (a choice either to fast) or to feed a Miskîn (poor person) (for every day). But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him. And that you fast, it is better for you if only you know. The month of Ramadān in which was revealed the Qur’ān, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadān i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Saum (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allāh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allāh [i.e. to say Takbîr (Allāhu-Akbar; Allāh is the Most Great) on seeing the crescent of the months of Ramadān and Shawwâl] for having guided you, so that you may be grateful to Him.” (Al- Baqarah: 183-185)

Fasting has several magnified benefits and abundant rewards. In order to extol its position, Almighty has linked fasting to Himself. In a Qudsi hadith reported by Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Indeed, every righteous deed by the son of Adam is rewarded from ten times to seven hundred times. However Allah Almighty says: ‘Fasting is an exception. This is because it is for Me and I shall reward the one who fasts accordingly. He left his

Literal meaning:

To abstain from and avoid the consumption of a particular thing.

Fasting in the context of Shari’ah means:

To worship Allah by abstaining from the ingestion of food, drinks and sexual intercourse from dawn until sunset.

yearnings, wishes and food for My sake.
And, indeed, the change in odor (Al Khaloof) from his mouth is more pleasing to Allah than the fragrance of Musk (perfume).”(1)

Wisdom behind the Prescription of Fasting

1. To establish piety by submitting to the commandments of Allah and responding by willingly complying to His rulings. Allah Almighty says: “So that you may gain piety” (Al- Baqarah: 183).
2. To train the soul to be patient and to empower the mind over its whims.
3. To inculcate in every individual righteousness and compassion towards the needy and the less privileged, as when he feels hunger his mind would be softened, making him milder when assisting the less privileged.
4. To ease the body’s system of its copious tasks and thus ensure a good and healthy bodily function.

Rulings on Fasting

Fasting, according to the prescription of Allah, is of two kinds:

1. Compulsory Fasting

This is also of two kinds:

(1) Agreed upon.

- a. Obligatory fasting which, from the beginning, Allah Almighty decreed as an obligation upon His servants. This is Fasting in the month of Ramadān, one of the five pillars of Islam.
- b. Obligatory fasting whose compulsion was due to or caused by the servant of Allah. Examples include fasting due to pledges or as a result of expiation for one’s inequities.

2. Recommended Fasting

This includes all forms of Fasting recommended by Allah Almighty and/or His Messenger. Examples of this is fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, three days of every lunar month, on the tenth day of Muharram (first month of the Islamic calendar), the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah (the 12th month) and on the Day of ‘Arafah (i.e. the 9th day of Dhul Hijjah).

Conditions for the Obligation of Fasting

1. Islam: Fasting is not compulsory on unbelievers.
2. Maturity: Fasting is not compulsory on children, but they may be ordered or encouraged to fast if they have the ability, so that they may become acquainted with it.
3. Sanity: Fasting is not compulsory on the insane.
4. Ability: Fasting is not compulsory on whosoever is too incapacitated to fast.



Fasting in the Month of Ramadān

Fasting in the month of Ramadān is a pillar of Islām and an obligation prescribed by Allah Almighty on His slaves. Allah, the Exalted, says: “O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may be pious.” (Al- Baqarah: 183). The Prophet ﷺ also said: “Islām is built upon five pillars,”⁽¹⁾ and he mentioned fasting in the month of Ramadān.

Some of the Merits of Fasting in the Month of Ramadān

1. Fasting and standing up for prayers in the month of Ramadān result in forgiveness of previous sins. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever Fasts the Month of Ramadān while he believes and expects rewards from Allah Almighty eimānan (i.e. believing in its reward) wahtisāban (i.e. sincerely and hoping to see the Face of his Lord), will have his past sins forgiven.”⁽²⁾ The Prophet ﷺ also said: “Whosoever stands for prayer in the month of Ramadān, while he believes and expects rewards from Allah (eimānan wahtisāban), will have his past sins forgiven.”⁽³⁾
2. Whosoever stands in prayer during the Night of Majesty, will have his past sins forgiven. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whosoever stands for prayer in the Night of Majesty, while he believes in and expects rewards from Allah Almighty, will have his past sins forgiven.”⁽⁴⁾

3. Lesser Hajj performed during the month of Ramadān is equal in reward to that of those who performed Hajj with the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Lesser Hajj (‘Umrah) performed during the month of Ramadān is equal in reward to that of those who performed Hajj with me.”⁽⁵⁾
4. In the month of Ramadān the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates leading to Hell are closed, the shayāteen (devils) are chained and the minds are ready for righteous deeds. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.) said: “ When the month of Ramadān advances the gates of Heaven are opened, the gates leading to Hell are closed and the devils are chained.”⁽⁶⁾

Therefore Muslims have to take the initiative to repent to Allah, abstain from committing abominable actions, and continuously approach Allah for His Mercy and bounties.

5. The month of Ramadān is the month of Al-Qur’an and it was revealed in it. Thus, it is necessary to read it (The Qur’an) frequently therein. Allah Almighty says: “The month of Ramadān in which was revealed the Qur’an, a guidance for mankind and a clear proof for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)...” (Al-Baqarah: 185)
6. The month of Ramadān is a month of generosity, benevolence and charity. Ibn ‘Abbas ؓ said: “The Prophet ﷺ was the most generous of men and he was more generous in Ramadān. Indeed the Prophet ﷺ used to meet with Jibreel every year in the month Ramadān until the month ended, and the Prophet would read the Qur’an to him. Indeed the Prophet ﷺ was more generous and better in terms of good deeds when he met with Jibreel, more so than the blowing wind.”⁽⁷⁾

(1) Source: Al-Bukhari.

(2) Agreed upon.

(3) Agreed upon.

(4) Agreed upon.

(5) Source: Muslim.

(6) Agreed upon.

(7) Agreed upon.

That which Establishes the Commencement of Ramadān

The commencement of Ramadān is established by the sighting of the crescent. When the crescent is sighted after sunset on the twenty-ninth day of Sha'ban, it indeed indicates the commencement of Ramadān. However, if the crescent was not seen after the sunset on the eve of the thirtieth day, due to cloudy weather, or dust or smoke in the air, then Sha'ban will be counted up to thirty. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Fast when it (the crescent) is seen and break when it is seen, but when it is obscured from your sight, then complete the count up to thirty."⁽¹⁾

Breaking Fast in Ramadān

Breaking fast in Ramadān is prohibited and it is one of the grave sins. Thus if anyone breaks his fast without a justifiable reason and refuses to repent sincerely to Allah, a complete year of fasting will not be accepted from him, even if he fasts it. This is due to the statement of the Prophet: "Whosoever breaks a day of fasting without a justifiable concession given to him by Allah Almighty, a year of fasting will not suffice as an expiation for him."⁽²⁾ The punishment due to breaking fast is grave. On the authority of Abu Umāmah Al-Bāhiliī who said, he heard the Prophet saying: "During⁽³⁾ the course of my sleep two men came to me and held my upper arm, and we went to a rugged mountain. They asked me to climb it, but I told them I could not. They told me that they would make it easy for me. When I climbed the mountain and reached its middle, I heard loud voices. I asked, 'What are these voices?' They said, 'This is the howling⁽⁴⁾ of the people of Hell.' Then I was taken [to another place], and I saw people hanging from their hamstrings⁽⁵⁾, with

(1) Agreed upon.

(2) Source: Abu Dawud.

(3) Baynā: during the course.

(4) Uwa': screaming.

(5) A rāqeeb: tendons behind the feet.

the corners of their mouths torn⁽⁶⁾ and dripping with blood. I asked, 'Who are these?' They said, 'The people who broke their fast before the proper time of breaking the fast⁽⁷⁾.'"⁽⁸⁾

(6) Ashdāquhum: Surroundings of their mouth.

(7) break their Fast before the time (the sun has set).

(8) Source: Ibn Hibban.



The Manner of our Salaf (the Pious Predecessors) in Ramadān

Muhammad ﷺ was the example for the Salaf (the Pious Predecessors)

Ibn Al Qayyim (may Allah have mercy upon him) said, "... and among his guidance ﷺ in the month of Ramadān are: intensifying the worship of Allah Almighty; as Jibreel used to revise the Qur'an with him in Ramadān. And the Prophet ﷺ was the most generous of men and he was more generous in Ramadān, when he met with Jibreel, more so than a cool breeze. (1)

The Salaf (the Pious Predecessors) and the Qur'an in Ramadān

It is recommended in the favored times, such as the month of Ramadan, especially the nights in which we search for Laylatul Qadr (the Night of Majesty), that we should increase the recitation of the Qur'an to obtain the benefit of this time in this month.

On the first night of Ramadan, Imam Bukhari (may Allah have mercy upon him) used to gather his companions and lead them in the Prayer. He used to recite twenty verses in each rak'ah (i.e. a unit of prescribed movements and words followed by Muslims while offering prayers to Allah) and so forth until he finished the whole Qur'an. He also recited from half to one third of the Qur'an at the time before daybreak (Sohoor), so as to finish the entire Qur'an by the time he

(1) Zādul Ma'ād fi Hadī Khayril-'Ibād (2/30).





broke the fast every night. He used to say, “At each time of finishing the Qur’an, there is an accepted invocation that Allah will fulfill.”⁽¹⁾

It was narrated on the authority of Al-Shafe’y that he finished reciting the entire Qur’an sixty times in Ramadan, besides those recited in his prayers.⁽²⁾

The Salaf (the Pious Predecessors) and standing up at night for prayer in the month of Ramadan

It has been reported on the authority of Al Sa’eb Ibn Yazid, who said, “In the era of Oman Ibn Al-Khattab, they used to stand up at night for prayer in Ramadan praying twenty Rakat, and they used to recite about two hundred verses of Qur’an in a go⁽³⁾. In the era of Othman Ibn Affan, they had to support themselves with canes because of the length of time they used to stand in prayer.”⁽⁴⁾

It has been reported on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Abi Bakr, who said, “I heard my father saying: ‘By the time we had finished our prayers in Ramadan, the servants would have to rush to prepare food in fear of the coming of Fajr.’”⁽⁵⁾

Nafi’ reported that Ibn `Umar used to pray in his house during the month of Ramadan. When the people departed from the mosque, he would go off to the Prophet’s Mosque with a flask of water. He would not leave the mosque again until after Fajr Prayer.⁽⁶⁾

(1) Sifat Al-Safwa (4/170).

(2) Sifat Al-Safwa (5/255).

(3) means the verses that are more than one hundred.

(4) Source: Al-Baihaqi in al-Sunnan Al-Kubra (2/699).

(5) Muwaṭṭā Al-Imam Malik-Abdul Baqi (1/116).

(6) Source: Al-Baihaqi in al-Sunnan Al-Kubra (2/699).