

Prior to the creation of man, it was envisaged by the Angels that mischief making and rebellion would be part and parcel of man's nature. Very remarkably, the Supreme Creator Allah did not rebut this cry of the Angels, but instead only answered with the caution of, "Certainly, I know what you do not know."

Thus, history testifies that Messengers of Allah (alaihimus salaam) have been sent to every nation upon the face of the earth, and this is also confirmed in the Glorious Quran, the purpose of which is for the physical, moral and spiritual enlightenment of man. One of the tenets of the final Scripture, the Holy Quran, and a Command of Almighty Allah is "Fasting" - an institution which is generally accepted as a means of subjugation of man's baser self, and helping him to be more moral and earning spiritual advancement.

The Divine decree of Fasting is a universal enjoyment. The Encyclopedia Britannica says: "It would be difficult to name any religious system in which it (fasting) is wholly unrecognised." The Bible tells us that the Prophet Isa (alaihis salaam) and Prophet Musa (alaihis salaam) fasted for full 40 days. Gautham Buddha fasted until he was actually reduced to skin and bones, as can be ascertained from his statues. And for a surety, all spiritual luminaries cannot omit this indispensable essential pillar for the physical, moral and spiritual purification of their respective adherents.

Why is it, that mankind must undergo this gruelling task of Fasting? The Holy Quran furnishes this reason: "That you may guard against evil." (2: 183) This is the special beauty of the Divine Command - it plainly spells the most significant importance of the Ramadaan fast. Evil, as we see today, circumscribes the very foundation of man's character and the society where he lives.

Today's rational, scientific and modern man is living in a world that is seething with indescribable crimes and rampant acts of unrighteousness. Various man-formulated deterrents and laws which have been enacted to conquer evils, have absolutely failed. A proof of this lies in the numerous courts of laws that conduct cases of diverse crimes and injustices every day; and also the cells of prisons are clear signs that man-made laws have had very little effect or no effect for the curbing of sins and other evils.

Today, we notice that evils such as gambling, prostitution, alcohol, and a host of others have been legitimised by certain Governments. Yet there is a hue and cry at the consequences of these and many other evils which are made legally permissible. Since it is now indisputable that man-orientated cure for evils are ineffective and impotent, it thus necessitates the intervention of the Divine hand. Fasting now plays the role as the firmest reign for the control of the widespread, sin-plagued humanity.

Man and animal share the same physical characteristics and physique. But since animals are not gifted with the faculties of speech, reason, understanding, choice, etc. man emerges as the higher creation. In fact, man is Allah's Khalifa (representative) on earth. When man becomes oblivious of his higher objective, when he is indifferent to the Commandments of Allah and his duties as a Muslim, he is likened to an animal. He confines his energies and aspirations within the boundaries of his life, and ponders not on the life hereafter.

Like the physical animal, his object is just to live for this material world. Eating, drinking, sleeping, multiplying, etc. become the "be all" and "end all" of his life, too. What difference is there now between the animal and the "modern," "rational" and "intellectual" man? It is this animal in man that has to be subjugated before man can reveal his true identity.

Our studies of animals would show that they can only be tamed when deprived of food, drink and sensual desires for a limited period of time. You can confirm this from a zoologist. So is it with man: depriving him of these intrinsic daily requirements for well over 12 hours daily for an entire month, may undoubtedly bring about a spiritual transformation within, when his animal desires are tamed and this ultimately result in his magnetic affiliation with the Divine Being.

Almost every man, with the exception of Prophets and spiritual luminaries, have the tint of the animal characteristics within him. But many, with Allah's Help, do control it. The desire to amass more and more wealth (lawfully or unlawfully), injuring our fellow human beings, and a host of other vices which we are lured to, display the animal instinct within humans.

The Holy Quran says: "Look at him who takes his desires for his god" - a practical Divine observation of man's character. As can be seen, the object of Fasting is to help us become masters of our passions and materialistic cravings, and becoming alive to the need of others, instead of us being slaves to them. We must aspire and work to become that "Mutaqqi" (pious through Allah-consciousness) - with whom Allah is pleased with. This goal can only be achieved if we fully comprehend the true implications of our fasting during the month of Ramadaan.

## RAMADAAN

O people, there comes upon you a great month, a most blessed month, in which lies a night greater in worth than one thousand months. Allah has made compulsory Fasting in this month and has decreed wakefulness at night (i.e. Taraweeh) Sunnah. Whosoever tries drawing nearer to Allah by performing any Nafil (optional) deed in this month, for him shall be such reward as if he performed a Fardh in any other time of the year. And whosoever performs a Fardh, for him shall be the reward of

seventy Fardh in any other time of the year. This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for true patience is Jannah; it is the month of sympathy with one's fellowmen; it is the month wherein believer's Rizq (provision) is increased.

The month of Ramadhaan, the month of blessings has come to you wherein Allah turns towards you and sends down to you this special Mercy, forgives your faults, accepts prayers, appreciates your competition for the greatest good and boasts to the Angels about you. So show to Allah your righteousness; for verily, the most pitiable and unfortunate one is he who is deprived of Allah's Mercy in this month. (Tabraani)

The Doors of Jannah are opened up on the first night of Ramadhaan. Not a single door is closed until the last night of Ramadaan. (Bayhaqi)

And in this month, four things you should endeavor to perform in great number; two of which shall be to please your Lord, while the other two shall be those without which you cannot make do. Those which shall be to please your Lord, are that you should in great quantity recite the Kalimah Tayyibah, "Laa ilaaha illallah", and make much "Istighfaar" (beg Allah's forgiveness). And as for those, without which you cannot make do, you should beg Allah for entry into Jannah and seek refuge with Him from the Fire of Jahannam. (Ibne Khuzaymah)

When the month of Ramadaan comes, the Doors of Jannah are thrown open and the Doors of Jahannam are closed and the Shayateen are chained up. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Suhoor (Sehri)

Verily, Allah and His angels send mercy upon those who eat Suhoor. (Tabraani)

Eat Suhoor because in Suhoor lies Barakah. (Mishkaat)

Days of Ramadaan

Ther fishes in the sea seek forgiveness for those fasting until they break their fast. Allah decorates His Jannah every day and then says, "The time is near when My pious servants shall cast aside the great trials and come to me." (Ahmad)

During each day and night of Ramadaan, Allah sets free great number of souls from Hell. And for every Muslim, during each day and night, at least one Du<sup>❖</sup>a is certainly accepted. (Bazzaaz)

Sawm (Fasting)

Sawm(Fasting) is a shield, as long as he (the fasting person) does not tear it up. (Nisaai)

Note: Fasting is a protection from Shaytaan or from Allah's punishment in the Hereafter. One who indulges in sins whilst fasting such as lies, backbiting, etc., they become the cause of the fast becoming wasted.

All good deeds are for the one who renders them, but Fasting is exclusively for me (Allah). (Bukhari)

Fasting is a shield and a powerful fortress. (Ahmad, Bayhaqi)

I swear by that Being in Whose possession is the life of Muhammad! The odour of the mouth of a fasting person is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk. (Bukhari)

Fasting is exclusively for Allah, the reward of it (being limitless) no one knows besides Allah. (Tabraani)

Iftaar

Whosoever gives something to a fasting person in order to break the fast, for him there shall be forgiveness for his sins and emancipation from the Fire of Jahannam; and for him (the one who gives) shall be the same reward as for him (whom he fed), without that person<sup>❖</sup>s (the one who was fed) reward being diminished in the least. (Ibne Khuzayrnah, Bayhaqi)

Whoever gave a person, who fasted, water to drink, Allah shall give him a drink from my Fountain where after he shall never again feel thirsty until he enters Jannah. (Ibne Khuzaymah)

The fasting person experiences two (occasions) of delight: at the time of Iftaar and at the time he will meet his Rabb. (Bukhari)

Not a single prayer made by a fasting person at the time of breaking fast is rejected. (Ibne Maajah)

### Nights of Ramadaan

Whoever stands in prayer and worship in (the nights of) Ramadaan, with Imaan and with sincere hope of gaining reward, his previous sins are forgiven. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Allah Ta<sup>ala</sup> has ordained Fasting in Ramadaan compulsory, I have decreed (by the Command of Allah) wakefulness at night (that is Taraweeh, etc.) Sunnah. Whoever in the state of Imaan and with the hope of gaining reward fasts in Ramadaan and stays awake at night (Taraweeh), emerges from sin, purified as the day when his mother gave birth to him. (Nisai)

For every Salaat performed during the nights of Ramadaan (that is Taraweeh, etc.) Allah Ta<sup>ala</sup> records one and a half thousand goods deeds for every Sajdah (prostration). (Bayhaqi)

### I'tikaaf

It is related by Abu Hurayrah (radi Allahu anhu) Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) observed I'tikaaf for ten days every year in the month of Ramadaan. In the year he passed away, he observed it for twenty days. (Bukhari)

those who observe (I'tikaaf) are prevented from all sins and they obtain reward as if they are rendering all good deeds. (Mishkaat)

He who observes the ten days of I'tikaaf during Ramadaan will obtain the reward of two Hajj and two Umrah. (Bayhaqi)

Last Night of Ramadaan

Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said, "On the last night of Ramadaan, the fasting Muslims are forgiven". The Sahabah (radi Allahu anhum) inquired: "O Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), is that the Night of Power?" Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) replied, "No! But it is only right that a servant should be given his reward having completed his duty." (Ahmad)

NOTE:

Muslim must scan the skies for the sighting of the moon for Ramadaan and for Eid and convey the Shari method of Shahaadat to the Ulama.

FASTING MERITS, RULES AND SUPPLICATION

MERITS:

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says: "O believers! Fastings have been made obligatory upon you as were made before you, so that you may become pious." (2:183) Thus the fastings were obligatory on Muslims and it became the third pillar of Islam. Regarding merits of fastings there are so many Hadiths have been narrated, some of them are being referred below:

Hazrat Abu Huraira (radi Allahu anhu) said that our Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said that he who keeps fast with belief and hope of getting blessings then his forthcoming sins will be forgiven and he who believes and prays in the nights of Ramadaan with the intention of getting blessings then his forthcoming sins will be forgiven and he who believes and prays with the intention of getting blessings in the night of Qadr, his forthcoming sins will be forgiven. (Bukhari & Muslim)

Hazrat Suhail bin Sa'ad (radi Allahu anhu) said that our Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said that in Heaven there is a door which is called "RAYAN". On the Day of Judgment (Qiyamah) only the people who observed fastings will enter into Heaven through this door. Nobody other than those

mentioned will enter. A call will be made, where are those who used to keep fasts? Then the people of fasting will stand up and enter into Heaven and then the door would be closed and none could be able to enter through this. (Muslim)

Hazrat Abu Huraira (radi Allahu anhu) said that I have heard our Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) saying that Allah says: All the deeds other than fasts are for the men himself but fastings is for Me and I only will give reward for that. I swear by Who has Power on my Soul that the smell from the mouth of a fasting person is better than the smell of "Musk" scent. (Muslim)

#### RULES:

For every day's fasting, intention must be done before the time of "Zawaal" or (Nisf un Nahar Sharayee).

Intention for fasting need not be pronounced, only intention by heart is sufficient but it is better to pronounce the words. (Bahare Shari $\heartsuit$ at, part 5)

Eating by mistake does not break the fasting, putting oil in your hair or putting black powder in the eyes and entering a fly in the mouth or smoke or dust of flour do not break the fasting. Gargling the mouth and throwing out the water then swallowing the wetness in the mouth and entering water in the ear does not break the fasting. If you cough and swallow the spit of any quantity does not break the fasting. Nightfall and backbiting also does not break the fast although backbiting is a great sin. Similarly, if you are fasting but did not took bath after sex then it will not break the fast although to remain without bath (Ghusl) for whole day is Haraam. If your lips become wet with your saliva and are then swallowed, Fast will not break. (Bahare Shari $\heartsuit$ at, part 5)

If you were gargling, the water went inside without intention or the water went up inside the nose or putting oil in the ear or putting drops inside the nose breaks the fasting if you remember that you are fasting.

Intentionally mouthful of vomiting breaks the fast if you remember that you are fasting, if it is less than mouthful vomiting then fasting did not break.

If you vomitted unintentionally but if it is less than a mouthful, then fasting did not break but if it is mouthful and you swallowed it back, then it did break the fasting.

If tears entered in the mouth and if they are more than one or two drops and you felt the salty taste in the whole mouth then it did break the fasting.

If you spit on your hand and then swallow your spit or swallow somebody's spit then it did break the fasting.

Drinking water or eating while sleeping breaks the fasting.

Kissing, touching and having sex with your wife leading to discharge breaks the fasts.

Normally eating, drinking, smoking, chewing tobacco or beetle-leaves breaks the fasts if you remember that you are observing fast. (Bahare Shari<sup>at</sup>, part 5)

To break the Ramadaan fasts intentionally is punishable by a fine. For breaking every Ramadaan fast intentionally - as a fine one has to keep 60 days continuous fasting. If it is not possible, then pay for the release of one slave for each fast. If this is not possible, then provide food for 60 poor men twice daily. (Qanoon-e-Shari<sup>at</sup>, part 1)

Lying, backbiting, ugly words, dirty talking and giving trouble to others makes fasting Makrooh (less blessings). Collecting saliva in your mouth and then swallowing it also makes fasting Makrooh. Delay in Sehri (eating before daybreak) is permissible but delaying up to the point of daybreak is Makrooh. (Bahare Shari<sup>at</sup>, part 5)

Cleaning your teeth with Miswak (a stick to dean the teeth) in fasting is not Makrooh. (Bahare Shari<sup>at</sup>, part 5)

**WHO IS EXEMPTED FROM FASTING:**

In the following conditions, not to keep fasts is permitted, but one will have to keep them after Ramadaan month:

If one is on a journey, and if that journey is at least 92 Kilometers (57.5 miles) long.

Pregnant and breast-feeding women when she is concerned about the health of herself or the baby.

If a person is sick and he is concerned that the disease will get worst or will take longer time to cure or a healthy person, if he is sure to get sick.

Ladies having child birth and menstruation period. (Bahare Shari<sup>h</sup>at, part 5)

A person is so old who is not capable of fasting nor he can hope of repeating the missed fasting then he should pay "Fidya" a fixed amount per day. That is to feed a poor twice for each fasting or give Sadaqa equivalent to Sadaqa Fitr. (Bahare Shari<sup>h</sup>at, part 5)

#### SUPPLICATIONS:

Du<sup>o</sup>a for Fasting: Allahumma asumu ghadal laka faghfirli ma qadamtu wama akhartu. Or Wabi saumi ghadin nawatu min Shahri Ramadaan.

Du<sup>o</sup>a when breaking Fast: Allahumma laka sumtu wa bika aamantu wa alaika tawakkaltu wa alaa rizqika aftartu fataqabal minni ma qaddamtu wama akhartu.

Supplication for Taraweeh: Sub Hana Zil Mulki Wal Malakoot. Sub Hana Zil Eizzati Wal Azmati Wal Haibati Wal Qudrati Wal Kibreeyai Wal Jabaroot. Sub Hanal Malikil Hayyillazi La Yanamu Wala Yamoot Subbuhun Quddusun Rabbuna Wa Rabbul Malaaiikati War<sup>o</sup>rooh. Allahumma Ajirna Minannari Ya Mujeeru Ya Mujeeru Ya Mujeer.

#### LAYLATUL QADR <sup>h</sup> THE NIGHT OF POWER

The month of Ramadan enjoys a intrinsic superiority over all other months of the year. It has a night better than thousand months according to the Qur'an: "Undoubtedly, we sent it down in the blessed and valuable night. And what you know, what the blessed night is? The blessed and valuable night is better than a thousand months. Therein descend angels and Jibrail (the Spirit) by the command of their Lord for every affair. That is all peace till the rising of the dawn." (Surah Qadr)

About the reason of revelation of this verse, it has been narrated by our Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) that one day he talked to his Companions about a person of a past nation and informed them that he spent a thousand months praying the whole night and doing Jihad all day. So his companions felt very sorry that due to their short life they cannot get that status. Then Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala revealed this verse (Surah) and informed Muslims that though you have not been given long lives yet by praying on the Night of Power you can get the rewards more than a person praying one thousand months.

The Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) also described several times the significant values of this night: Hazrat Anas bin Maalik (radi Allahu anhu) reported that the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said that this month (Ramadaan) has approached to you, a night of this month is better than thousand months. One who failed to get the blessings of this is failed to get any blessings. And no one is failed but he who is truly disappointed. Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala promised forgiveness to the praying persons in this blessed night: Abu Huraira (radi Allahu anhu) reported that our Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said that one who prays in this night with Imaan and with the intention of getting blessings will be forgiven. Anas bin Maalik (radi Allahu anhu) reported that our Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said that at the Night of Power, Jibrael (alaihis salaam) came down with a group of angels and prayed for mercy for the bondsman who is engaged in the worship of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala sitting or standing.

How to find out Laylatul Qadr:

It is narrated by Hazrat Aisha (radi Allahu anha) that the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Seek the Night of Power in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan". This Hadith shows that the Night of Power falls on one of the odd nights of last ten days that is 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th night. But we have some other indications from the companions of the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and Muhaddhiseen, that this should be the night of 27th of Ramadaan. Due to this it seems a general consensus among the Islamic Scholars towards the 27th night. However, it is better to keep vigil during all odd nights of last ten days to get the blessings of this precious night. The Du'a to be read during this night is "Allahumma innaka afuwuh tuhibbul afwa fa'afu anni". This Du'a was taught to Hazrat Ayesha Siddiqah (radi Allahu anha) by Huzoor (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) himself.

HOW SHOULD A MUSLIM OBSERVE EID-UL-FITR

Eid-ul-Fitr refers to the festival after completion of fasting in the Month of Ramadaan. This auspicious occasion is celebrated on the 1st of Shawaal, which is the 10th month of the Islamic

calendar. The festival of Eid-ul-Fitr is a manner of showing appreciation and gratitude to Almighty Allah for all that He has bestowed upon us.

On the morning of Eid-ul-Fitr, Muslims throughout the world perform the traditional Eid Salaah, which is Waajib upon all Muslims. It is not permissible to miss the Eid prayer without any valid reason. With the exception of performing the Eid Prayer, there are also various actions which are desirable on the day of Eid. These are:

to trim the hair and nails,

to perform the Ghusl (Ceremonial Bath),

to use the Miswaak (special toothbrush),

to wear (if affordable) or good clean clothing, to wear a ring (for men - a silver ring with one stone), and to use Ittar (Perfume),

to perform the Fajr Salaah (morning prayer) in the nearest Mosque of your area,

to leave early to perform the Eid Salaah,

to give the Sadqa-e-Fitr (Eid-ul-Fitr Charity) before the Eid Salaah,

to go by foot (if possible) for the Eid Salaah, and return home in another route,

to eat a few dates (preferably an odd number) or something sweet before going for Eid Salaah, and

to show happiness and gratification, to give charity in abundance, to walk modestly towards the Eid gathering, and to wish and congratulate one another after the Eid Prayer.

As much as Eid is a time of rejoicing, it is also a time of giving and sharing with those less fortunate than yourself. The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) would always be the first to congratulate the poor and the orphans. We should also try to be as kind as possible on this day to our fellow Muslims. The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has stated, "Smiling in the face of your brother is Charity."

#### THE SPIRIT OF RAMADAAN SHOULD BE ALIVE - THE BLESSINGS OF ALMIGHTY WILL SHOWER UPON THE UMMMAH

Muslims are very glad to receive the Eid following a month of fasting to perform a sacred duty prescribed upon them. In this month, Muslims entered a state of purity and spiritual worship to seek the mercy and forgiveness of Almighty Allah.

People had during the month of Ramadaan exercised an unusual level of restraint and self-control to defy temptations and achieve victory over shaitaan. The spirit of social unity, sympathy, love and true affections prevailed throughout the entire month of Ramadaan. Muslims helped the poor in distress, showed love to the unfortunate, stayed up at night for prayers and fasted during the day. They hope that all the spiritual strength which they gained through prayer, contemplation and fasting will assist them to lead a good life and enter Jannah. Where do we go from here? What should now be our objective in life?

The benefits from this one month of fasting, should also be apparent in the other eleven months of the year. In other words, Muslims should show kindness, modesty, patience in times of difficulties and gratefulness when gaining the blessings of Almighty Allah. Not only should we show all these good qualities, but we should also abstain from all evils, such as jealousy, hatred, etc. Those Muslims who exercise self-control and patience are the pious ones that gain Allah's favour. We should try our best to build good relations with fellow Muslims. We should show gratitude, pity and love. In doing so, the Muslim world would be an embodiment of virtue and good morals, and stand out as an example to people of other faiths. It is a necessity in the trouble-filled world that we live in, for people to exercise self-restraint, patience and a deep sense of human understanding in order to alleviate the human misery that we see today and bring about the greatly needed peace that we desire. Last but not least, we should try to rejuvenate the enthusiasm to serve humanity.

Now that the month of Ramadaan is over we should understand that while our spiritual well-being is constantly under threat, a return to a life of greater devotion and prayer is the only foundation which the human race can build on for the future. In Islam lies total salvation, despite the state of Muslims today, to those wishing to take advantage of it as a remedy for the ills of the world.