

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful



Fasting (Sowm) in Ramadan

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Anniversary of Qur'an

O' who believe, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you; perchance you will guard yourselves. (2:183).

Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was sent down, a guidance for the people, and clear verses of guidance and criterion.(2:185)

Sowm (Fasting)

Abdullah Bin Ammar (May Allah be pleased with him) states that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "The fast and the Qur'an will both plead on behalf of the bondsmen who keeps fast in the day and recites or listens attentively to the recitation of the Qur'an at night standing in the presence of Allah (in Taraweeh). The fast will say "O my Lord, I had held him back from food, drink and sexual gratification, accept my intercession for him today and treat him with mercy and forgiveness. The Qur'an will say, " I had held him back from taking rest and sleep at night, O MY lord, accept my intercession for him today and treat him with mercy and forgiveness". The intercession of both the fast and Qur'an will be accepted and he will be treated with exceptional kindness". (Baihaqi).

Samaan (May Allah be pleased with him.) reports: "On the last day of Sha`baan (8th month of Islamic calendar) the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) addressed us and said: "O people, there comes over you now a great month, a most blessed month in which lies a night more greater in virtue than one thousand months. It is a month in which Allah has made Sunnah the Taraweeh by night. Whosoever intends drawing nearer to Allah by performing any virtuous deed, for him shall be the reward like him who had performed a Fardh in any other time. And whoever performs a Fardh, for him shall be the reward of seventy Fardh in any other time. This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for true patience is Jannah (paradise). It is the month of sympathy with one's fellow men. It is the

month wherein a true believer's RIZQ (food, good deeds, etc.) is increased. Whosoever feeds another who fasted, in order to break the fast (at sunset), for him there shall be forgiveness for his sins and emancipation from the fire of Jahannam (hell), and for him shall be the same reward as him (whom he fed) without that person's reward being decreased in the least."

The Night of Power (Lailatul Qadr)

Anas Ammar (May Allah be pleased with him) reports that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wassallam) said: "On Laylatul Qadr, the Angel Jibraeel (Alaihi Salaam) descends upon the earth with a group of Angels making Dua for blessings for every servant of Allah whom they see in worship, standing or sitting and engrossed in almighty Allah's praise. Then on the day of Eid Allah boasts about them to the Angels, 'O My Angels, what is the reward of that worker who had done his job very well?' The reply: 'O our Sustainer, his reward should be given to him in full.' To this Allah replies, 'O My Angels, verily My servants, the males among them as well as females, have today duly performed their obligatory duty, thereafter they set forth to place for Eid Salaah raising their voices in Dua to Me. I swear by My Honor, by My Grandeur, they fasted for me and I will give them their reward. Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) reports that Allah's Messenger ((Peace be upon him) said "Seek Lailatul Qadr among the odd numbered nights of the last ten days of the month of Ramadan".

Requirements and Conditions of the Duties Pertaining to Fasting Ramadan Moon Sighting

The efforts for sighting of the crescent moon which defines the lunar months, is obligatory upon the Muslim community or a delegated organization of Muslim community. Once the new moon has been sighted (i.e. the month's beginning has been determined), its "arrival"

should be proclaimed so that people may prepare to carry out the activities of that month on the right date and time. For example; in Dhulhijjah to perform Hajj and Eid, in Ramadan to start and end fasting etc. If determination of the new moon is impossible through sighting of the crescent, for whatever reason, the Muslim community or on their behalf the responsible organization (such as Ru'yat-e-Hilal Committee) of that particular geographical location can make decision based upon the principles of Shari'a.

The important thing is that the Muslim community should be united and should celebrate the festival in togetherness at least in one geographical location. What is required in Ramadan and in Eid is wholehearted devotion to Allah.

Intention

It is imperative during Ramadan to make the intention to fast every night before the dawn of the following day, otherwise the fast is void. However, it is not the case with voluntary fasts. When it is unclear whether or not the following day is the first day of Ramadan one should make the intention to fast in case it is. The possibility of a trustworthy witness being mistaken should not affect the intention of the person who plans to fast the following day. If a woman anticipates the end of her menstruation during which fasting is prohibited before dawn, she should also make the intention to fast, the following day.

Conditions of the Daily Fast

It is obligatory upon every Muslim after reaching the age of puberty to fast each day of Ramadan and not miss any fasting day intentionally. It is obligatory to make up any days for which fasting was missed unintentionally during Ramadan by fasting at a later date whether or not they had a valid excuse among which are menstruation, pregnancy, nursing a baby, illness, travel and so on. Fast days missed intentionally must be expiated by fasting for two consecutive months.

Eating or drinking invalidates the fast as does smoking, injections, enemas etc. Rinsing the mouth with water does not invalidate the fast, however, one must take care not to swallow or inhale as one's fast will become void. Care must be exercised concerning eating just before the fast is due to begin. One must also be careful not to anticipate the arrival of evening and thereby break the fast early. Married couples are forbidden to have intercourse whilst they are fasting. However, it is permissible after the fast has been broken in the evening. In the event that one experiences a "wet" dream whilst sleeping and then wake up the following morning in this condition of impurity his fast is not broken.

Deliberate seminal emission either through sexual contact or through no sexual contact invalidates the fast. The fast will not be broken by a kiss unless seminal fluid is discharged, therefore, it is discouraged. Induced vomiting invalidates the fast. However, if one cannot help it, the fast remains valid. Phlegm or mucus does not void the fast unless it is "collected" in the mouth and then swallowed.

In the event that one's fasting becomes void, one should continue the practice of those fasting - i.e. abstinence of food and drink etc. However, if sexual intercourse occurs during the fast of Ramadan, its expiation will be to fast for two consecutive months. If those who indulged in intercourse are unable to fast the two consecutive months then each should feed sixty poor people as an expiation. In the case of a woman whose menstruation finishes during the day, there is no obligation upon her to practice the fast for the rest of that day.

Pregnancy & Nursing

If a woman is pregnant or breast feeding and cannot fast on that account, fearing harm to her own health or that of her child, it is obligatory for her to fast the days that are missed later on, and according to some scholars to atone for missing

the fast by feeding the poor with the equivalent of a bushel of wheat for each lost day.

Sick and Elderly

In the case of elderly or ill people who are unable to fast, their expiation is also the feeding of the poor with the equivalent of a bushel of wheat for each day lost.

Travel

The traveler is not obliged to fast provided travel began before the time for the dawn prayer, the travel entailing the distance considered a condition for shortening the prayers. Missed fasts of the traveler must be made up after the end of Ramadan, but need not be expiated. In the event that a person has already started fasting, he should not break the fast when he embarks upon a journey, nor yet when he returns from a journey. There is no obligation upon a non-fasting traveler to resume the fast upon reaching their destination before the end of the fasting day, however it is preferable for the traveler to fast the entire day unless it incurs more than the usual hardship of fasting. A person is considered a traveler when he/she is planning to travel more than 57 miles. Nowadays the traveling of 57 miles is daily business for some people. Therefore, if one feels comfortable to fast even he /she travels 57 miles they can continue to fast.

Menstruation and Lochia

If a woman is menstruating or is bleeding due to childbirth (lochia), fasting is not valid until the menstruation ceases. Days missed by her can be made up anytime after the end of Ramadan during the year before the next Ramadan commences.

E' tekaaf

The meaning of E' tekaaf is to seclude oneself in the Masjid (for male) and at a specific place at home (for female) with the express intention of E' tekaaf. It is mandatory to have at least one person to do E' tekaaf during Ramadan in a community.