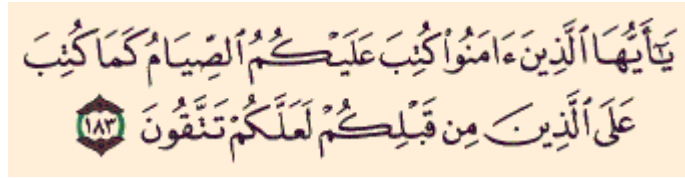


FASTING (SAYAM)



“O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed upon you as it was prescribed upon those before you, so that ye may learn self restrain and be pious” Quran 2:183

Ramadan, the month of fasting, is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and will fall in different times of the year as the Islamic months follow the lunar calendar. Fasting is obligatory on all Muslims during this month with the following exceptions: young, sick, travelers on a journey and menstruating women. Foster mothers and pregnant women are also exempt from fasting if it will harm them or their babies. However all missed fasts should be made up

The Prophet (Pbuh) singled out fasting when asked about a deed that leads its doer to the best of rewards, Paradise. This fact alone is sufficient for us to understand the greatness of fasting. Furthermore, the Prophet (Pbuh) tells us that Allah the Exalted said: "The most beloved deeds with which my slave comes closer to Me are the obligatory deeds." Also Allah Almighty said, "Every action of the son of Adam is given manifold reward, each good deed receiving then times its like, up to seven hundred times. Allah the Most High said, 'Except for fasting, for it is for Me and I will give recompense for it, he leaves off his desires and his food for Me.' for the fasting person there are two times of joy; a time when he breaks his fast and a time of joy when he meets his Lord, and the smell coming from the mouth of the fasting person is better with Allah than the smell of musk."

Through fasting you will gain enormous spiritual benefits. The worship of Allah that consisted only of prayer and meditation now expands into the physical realm. Your whole body is now united with your soul in the worshipping of our Creator and Sustainer, Allah. But fasting also confers many physical benefits. It cleanses our body of toxic compounds, rejuvenates our system, eradicates bad habits (like smoking), and teaches self-discipline. Fasting for thirty days may seem difficult, but gradually, insha Allah, you'll endure it with ease and patience with the help and company of your Muslim brothers and sisters and with the enormous rewards promised by Allah.

So Muslims wait for this, which allow them to cleanse their sole, ask Allah for forgiveness. But it must be done properly, the Prophet (Pbuh) has said: "Perhaps a person fasting will receive nothing from his fasting except hunger and thirst. This should raise our concern about fasting and increase our desire to perform this act of worship with the best intention and in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (Pbuh).

Certain Aspects and Rulings related to Fasting

- For the obligatory fast in the month of Ramadan, it is incumbent on everyone to have intention before the appearance of Fajr.

- Fast is performed between the time of True Fajr (that which makes food forbidden for the fasting person, and makes Fajr prayer lawful and the time as soon it is seen that the sun has set).
- Precise timing for the start and finish of each fasting day can be obtained from the prayer timetables from the Mosques in your area
- The interval between the end of Suhur (the pre-dawn meal) and the start of the obligatory prayer is the interval sufficient to recite Quran.
- Eating the pre-dawn meal (Suhur) contains many blessings and the Prophet (Pbuh.) ordered us to do take it, forbade us from leaving it. Allah knows best.
- Falsehood, ignorant and indecent speech is to be avoided as they may render one's fasting futile.
- A fasting person can begin fasting while in the state of Janaabah (major state of impurity that requires bath due to a sexual intercourse)
- The Prophet forbade a youth to kiss while fasting, while he allowed an old man since he is able to control himself.
- Giving blood and injections, which do not provide nourishment, does not break the fast. Also, there is no harm in tasting food, provided it does not reach the throat.
- Pouring cold water over one's head and taking a bath contain no harm to a fasting person.
- It is Sunnah of the Prophet and the practice of his companions to break the fast as soon as the Sun sets. Muslims are strongly encouraged to hasten breaking the fast.]
- The Prophet (Pbuh) used to break his fast before praying and he used to break it with fresh dates, if not then with older dates. And if not with dates, than with some mouthfuls of water.
- The Prophet said: "He who gives food for a fasting person to break his fast, he will receive the same reward as him, except that nothing will be reduced from the fasting persons reward."
- Deliberate eating and drinking, making oneself vomit, menstruation, after-birth bleeding, injection containing nourishment and sexual intercourse all nullifies the fast.
- As for Lailatul-Qadr, the Night of Decree, that is better than a thousand months (Quran 97), the Prophet (Pbuh) told us: "Seek it in the last ten, and if one of you is too weak or unable then let him not allow that to make him miss the final seven."
- The Prophet (Pbuh) used to exert himself greatly during Lailatul-Qadr. He would spend the nights in worship, detaching himself from women and ordering his family with this. So every Muslim should be eager to stand in prayer during Lailatul Qadr out of Iman and hoping for the great reward.
- The Prophet (Pbuh) said: "Whoever stands (in prayer) in Lailatul Qadr out of Iman and seeking reward then his previous sins are forgiven."
- It is Sunnah to pray Taraweeh in congregation
- All who are capable should take advantage of the month of Ramadan and perform Itkaff, i.e. fully attach oneself to worshipping in the mosque. One should inquire how the Prophet (Pbuh) performed Itkaff.
- Zakat Fitr is prescribed by Allah as a purification for those who fasted from loose and indecent talk, and to feed the poor Muslims as a provision for `Eid ul Fitr. One should inquire further about rulings related to it, especially upon whom it is obligatory and what is its quantity.
- The last but not the least, we should strive to constantly improve our worship and obedience of Allah the Most High, including once the month of Ramadan is over, Insha' Allah