

Ramadhaan, virtues of fasting, benefits, etiquettes

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

The features of the month of Ramadhaan, the virtues of fasting, its benefits and etiquettes

All praise is to Allaah, the Owner of favour, success and bestowal who legislated for His slaves the month of Ramadhaan to observe Saum (fasting) and Qiyaam (standing to pray at night) [Taraaweeh] once a year. He تعالى made it one of the pillars of Islaam and one of its great bases. It purifies souls from sins and evil acts. Peace and blessings be upon the one whom Allaah chose to clarify the rulings of Islaam; and selected to convey His legislation to humanity. He was then the best in standing (praying at night) and in observing fasting; in fulfilling the Message and standing firm and upright. Peace and blessing are upon his sincere Family, respectable Companions and those who follow their footsteps continually and with perfection.

Indeed Allaah تعالى prescribed fasting for all the nations even if it differed in way and time. Allaah تعالى says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

[O you who believe! Observing Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)]¹

In the second year of Hijrah, Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ prescribed definitely the fasting of Ramadhaan on the Ummah (nation) on the adult Muslim. If he is a healthy resident, observing Saum (fasting) will be compulsory; and as long as he is ill, he will be obliged to make up with the missed days. And so for the menstruating woman or one in post-partum bleeding. If one is a healthy traveller, he will choose between observance and making up. Indeed, Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ enjoined him to observe the fasting of the whole month from the start to the end and fixed him the beginning of fasting with an apparent limit, known by all; it is the sight of the crescent-moon or the completion of Sha'baan (30 days). So the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

لَا تَصُومُوا حَتَّى تَرَوْا الْهَيْلَالَ، وَلَا تُفْطِرُوا حَتَّى تَرَوْهُ، فَإِنْ غَمَّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقْدِرُوا لَهُ

["Do not observe Saum (fast) till you see the crescent-moon of Ramadhaan, and do not break Saum (fast) till you see the crescent of Shawwaal, and if the sky is overcast, then estimate it (Sha'baan) as 30 days."]²

¹ Soorah al-Baqaraah [2:183]

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As He تعالى fixed the beginning of fasting to him with clear and evident limits. He عز وجل made the start of observing fasting with the rise of the second dawn and limited its ending with the sunset within His statement:

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ
[And eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the thread (darkness of light), then complete your Saum (fast) till the nightfall].³

With this way and time, the obligation of observing fasting of Ramadhaan is prescribed definitely in Allaah's statement:

فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ
[So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadhaan, i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month].⁴

Observing fasting during Ramadhaan became one of the pillars of Islaam. Therefore, whoever belies its duty and denies its obligation is an apostate cast out of the fold of Islaam. If he repents, it will be accepted from him. If he does not repent, he is to be killed as a disbeliever. And whoever admits that it is obligatory and breaks his fasting deliberately, without any excuse commits, then, a major sin and a manifest evil act and deserves censure and deterrence.

Allaah عز وجل has distinguished the month of Ramadhaan from the other months of the year with a number of features. He تعالى marked the observance of its fasting from the acts of worship with several virtues, benefits and etiquettes.

The Features of the Month of Ramadhaan

Among the features of this sacred month are:

- **Observing Saum** (fasting) during Ramadhaan: It is the fourth pillar of Islaam and one of its significant bases, according to statement of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ، وَحَجِّ النَّبِيِّ الْحَرَامِ

["Islaam is based on five [principles]:

1. The Sha'ha'dah (testimony): La Ilaaha Illa Allaah Muhammad Rassool Allaah (None has the right to be worshiped but Allaah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah).
2. Iqaamat – as - Salaat (to offer the compulsory congregational prayers dutifully and perfectly).
3. To pay Zakaat (mandatory charity).
4. To observe Saum [fast (according to Islaamic teachings)] during the month of Ramadhaan. And
5. to perform Hajj (i.e. pilgrimage to the House of Allaah in Makkah.)⁵.

² The authenticity of this hadeeth is agreed upon. It is reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (4/119), Muslim (7/189, 190, 191), Abou Daawood (2/740), Ibn Maajah (1/529), An-Nasaa'ee (4/134), Ahmad (2/5, 13, 63) and Maalik in Al-Muwatta' (1/269) according to the hadeeth reported by Ibn' Umar رضي الله عنهما.

³ Soorah al-Baqaraah [2:187]

⁴ Soorah al-Baqaraah [2:185]

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It is known in religion as a necessity and one the duties enjoined by Allaah تعالى, according to the consensus of the scholars of Islaam.

- **The obligation of fasting Ramadhaan** is an individual obligation based on Allaah's statement:

فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ

[So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadhaan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts) that month.]⁶

- **The Revelation of the Qur'aan** in this month to bring people out from darkness into light and guide them to the way of truth and to the right path, to keep them away from wrong ways and error and to enlighten them with religious and worldly matters with what ensures them happiness and success in the present life and in the Hereafter. Allaah تعالى says:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

[The month of the Ramadhaan in which was revealed the Qur'aan, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong).]⁷

- **The gates of Paradise are opened** for a large number of lawful good deeds during this month, which are required to the access to Paradise; and the gates of Hellfire are closed for the short number of sins and evil acts leading to Hellfire.

- **In Ramadhaan, devils are chained and tied.** So, they fail to lead obedient people astray and turn them from the good righteous deeds. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

إِذَا جَاءَ رَمَضَانُ فَتُحْتِ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ وَغُلِقَتْ أَبْوَابُ النَّارِ وَصُوِّدَتِ الشَّيَاطِينُ

["When (the month of) Ramadhaan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained up."]⁸.

- **Allaah تعالى has people He frees from the Hellfire** in this month based on his صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ statement:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ عِنْدَ كُلِّ فِطْرِ عُنُقَاءَ مِنَ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ

["Allaah has people whom He redeems from Hell upon every Fitr (breaking the fast) and that is every night."]⁹.

⁵ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 8), Muslim (hadeeth 16) from the hadeeth of Ibn'Umar رضي الله عنهما. It was reported in "Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree" that Hajj was cited before Saum (fasting) of Ramadhaan. Thereon, Al-Bukhaaree established that order. However, Muslim related a version of Sa'd Ibn'Ubaidah on the authority of Ibn'Umar the precedence of Saum (fasting) over Hajj. He said: "A man said: 'And Hajj and Saum (fasting) of Ramadhaan' Then Ibn'Umar said: 'No, Saum (Fasting) of Ramadhaan then Hajj; I heard it from the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ like that' ". ["Fath Al-Baaree" Ibn Hajar (1/50)].

⁶ Soorah al-Baqaraah [2:185]

⁷ Soorah al-Baqaraah [2:185]

⁸ Reported By: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1898), Muslim (hadeeth 2547), An-Nasaa'ee (hadeeth 2112) and Maalik in Al-Muwatta' (hadeeth 686), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurayrah رضي الله عنه.

⁹ Reported by Ibn Maajah: (hadeeth 1643), from the hadeeth of Aboo Umaamah Al-Baahilee رضي الله عنه. It is considered Hassan (good) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Al-Jaami' As-Sagheer" (hadeeth 2166).

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- **Forgiveness is attained with the observance of Saum** (fasting) during Ramadhaan with sincere faith for this duty and seeking reward upon it to Allaah تعالى, according to the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ statement:

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

["Whoever observed fasting in Ramadhaan with perfect and seeking reward, he will have his previous sins forgiven."]¹⁰.

- **Performing Taraaweeh prayers** (optional prayer) is desirable, following the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ who aroused the interest in Qiyaam (standing to pray) by saying:

مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

["Whoever stood to pray (Taraaweeh) in Ramadhaan with perfect faith and seeking reward, he will have his previous sins forgiven."]¹¹.

- **There is a night in this month**, which is better than a thousand months, and standing to pray in that night is required for forgiveness. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

إِنَّ هَذَا الشَّهْرَ قَدْ حَضَرَكَمْ وَفِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ مَنْ حُرِمَهَا فَقَدْ حُرِمَ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ وَلَا يُحْرَمُ خَيْرَهَا إِلَّا مَحْرُومٌ

["This month (of Ramadhaan) approaches you. There is a night which is better than a thousand months, whoever is deprived of it, is deprived of all goodness. Only Mahroom (unfortunate) misses its goodness"]¹²

He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said:

مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

["Whoever performs Qiyaam during Lailat Al-Qadr (Night of Decree) with Faith and being hopeful of Allaah's reward, will have his former sins forgiven"]¹³.

- **Fasting Ramadhaan to the next Ramadhaan** expiates the minor sins and evils on condition that major sins are avoided. The evidence is his صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ statement:

الصَّلَاةُ الْخَمْسُ، وَالْجُمُعَةُ إِلَى الْجُمُعَةِ، وَرَمَضَانُ إِلَى رَمَضَانَ، مُكَوِّرَاتٌ مَا بَيْنَهُنَّ إِذَا اجْتَنَبْتَ الْكَبَائِرُ

["The five daily (prescribed) Salaah, and Friday (prayer) to the next Friday (prayer), and the fasting of Ramadhaan to the next Ramadhaan are expiations of the sins committed in between them, as major sins are avoided"]¹⁴.

Indeed, among the other most prominent beneficial event that took place in Ramadhaan was the Great Battle of Badr in which Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ separated the truth from falsehood. So, Islaam and its people triumphed and Shirk (polytheism) and its adherents were defeated therein, that was in the second year of Hijrah. The conquest of Makkah happened in this month as well; and people entered in Allaah's religion in crowds. Shirk (polytheism) and idolatry were eradicated by Allaah's تعالى favour. Thus, Makkah became the house of Islaam

¹⁰ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1951) and Muslim (hadeeth 760), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه.

¹¹ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 37) and Muslim (hadeeth 759), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه.

¹² Reported by: Ibn Maajah (hadeeth 1644), from the hadeeth of Anas Ibn Maalik رضي الله عنه. Al-Albaanee said, "Hassan Saheeh" (good authentic) in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 989) and in "Saheeh Ibn Maajah" (hadeeth 1341).

¹³ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 35) and Muslim (hadeeth 1815), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه.

¹⁴ Reported by: Muslim (hadeeth 233) and Ahmad (2/400, 414, 484) from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه.

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after it had been a stronghold of Shirk and polytheists. That was in the eighth year of Hijrah. The Muslims won the Battle of Hitteen in Ramadhaan 584 A.H and the crusaders were crushed there¹⁵. They took back Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and they also vanquished the Tartar armies in `Ayn Jaaloot, where the events of that decisive battle occurred in Ramadhaan 658. A.H¹⁶.

This is a summary of the features of the month of Ramadhaan and its several virtues and blessings. All praise be to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds.

The Virtues of Fasting

As for the virtues of fasting, there are many. Among them:

- **The rewards of good deeds are multiplied;** and their increasing number is not restricted. While other good deeds multiply the reward by ten to seven hundred, according to what the two Shaykhs (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim) reported from the hadeeth of Abou Hurayrah رضي الله عنه who said:

كُلُّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ آدَمَ يُضَاعَفُ، الْحَسَنَةُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا إِلَى سَبْعِمِائَةِ ضِعْفٍ إِلَى مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: إِلَّا الصِّيَامَ فَإِنَّهُ لِي وَأَنَا أُجْزِي بِهِ، يَدْعُ شَهْوَتَهُ وَطَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِي، لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ فَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ وَفَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ، وَلِخُلُوفٍ مِمَّنْ الصَّائِمِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَطْيَبُ مِنْ رِيحِ الْمُسْكِ

["The Messenger of Allaah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: 'Every (good) deed of the son of Aadam is multiplied in reward from ten to seven hundred times to what Allaah may will'. Allaah تعالى will say: 'The reward of observing Saum (fasting) is different from the reward of other good deeds. Saum (fasting) is for Me, and I Alone will give its reward. The person observing Saum abstains from passion, food and drink only for My sake'. The fasting person has two joyous occasions, one at the time of breaking his fast, and the other at the time of greeting his Rabb (Lord). Surely the breath which issues from the mouth of the fasting person is better smelling to Allaah than the fragrance of musk."]¹⁷.

It becomes evident from this hadeeth that Allaah تعالى has made fasting peculiarly to Himself from the rest of the good deeds and He has distinguished it by multiplying the reward as it as previously mentioned – and that sincerity in observing fasting is deeper in it than other (good) deeds, according to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم statement:

تَرَكَ شَهْوَتَهُ وَطَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِي

["He left his passion, food and drink only for My sake"]¹⁸.

Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ will take care of the reward of the fasting person who will get joy in the world and the Hereafter; a praised joy that occurs upon the obedience of Allaah تعالى as the Ayah (verse) refers to:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا

¹⁵ See the defeat of the crusaders in the battle of "Hitteen" in "Al-Kaamil" by Ibn Al-Atheer (11/534).

¹⁶ See the events of "Ayn Jaloot" in "Al-Bidaayah Wan- Nihaayah" by Ibn Katheer (12/220).

¹⁷ Reported by: Ibn Maajah (hadeeth 1637), from the hadeeth of Abou Hurairah رضي الله عنه. It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Ibn Maajah" (hadeeth 1335) and in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 968).

¹⁸ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree

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[Say; 'In the Bounty of Allaah, and His Mercy (i.e. Islaam and the Qur'aan); there let them rejoice.' That is better than what (the wealth) they amass]¹⁹

It is worth stating from this hadeeth that the results arising from the obedience of Allaah are loved to Him تعالى as the change of the smell of the fasting person's mouth happens because of the observance of fasting.

- **Among the virtues of fasting is that it will intercede for the slave** of Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ on the Day of Resurrection. It will shield him against sins and harmful desires and will protect him from Hellfire. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

الصِّيَامُ وَالْقُرْآنُ يَشْفَعَانِ لِلْعَبْدِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، يَقُولُ الصِّيَامُ: أَيْ رَبِّ مَنَعْتُهُ الطَّعَامَ وَالشَّهْوَةَ فَشَفِّعْنِي فِيهِ. وَيَقُولُ الْقُرْآنُ: مَنَعْتُهُ النَّوْمَ بِاللَّيْلِ فَشَفِّعْنِي فِيهِ. قَالَ فَيُشَفَّعَانِ

["Fasting and the Qur'aan will intercede for the slave on the Day of Resurrection. Fasting will say: 'O Lord, I deprived him of his food and his desire, so let me intercede for him.' And the Qur'aan will say: 'I deprived him of his sleep at night, so let me intercede for him.' Then they will intercede."]²⁰.

He صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

الصِّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ، وَجِصْنٌ حَصِينٌ مِنَ النَّارِ

["Saum (fasting) is a shield (or a screen or a shelter) and a strong fortress"]²¹.

- **And among its virtues is that the fasting person's Du'aa** (invocations) are answered, according to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم statement:

وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ دَعْوَةٌ مُسْتَجَابَةٌ...

["...Surely for every Muslim in every day and night there is a granted supplication"]²²

It has already been said while mentioning the verses regarding Saum (fasting) that the fasting person is incited to invoke Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ a lot. Allaah تعالى said:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

[And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge) I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor).]²³

- **Among the virtues of Saum** (fasting) is that it will keep the fasting person away from Hellfire on the Day of Resurrection. The proof is the statement of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَصُومُ يَوْمًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بَاعَدَ اللَّهُ بِذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَجْهَهُ عَنِ النَّارِ سَبْعِينَ حَرِيْفًا

¹⁹ Soorah Yoonus [10:58]

²⁰ Reported by: Ahmad (hadeeth 6785), from the hadeeth of `Abdullaah Ibn `Amr رضي الله عنهما. It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Al-Jaami" (hadeeth 3776) and in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 1429).

²¹ Reported by: Ahmad (hadeeth 9463), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه. It is considered Hassan (good) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Al-Jaami" (hadeeth 3774) and in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 980).

²² Reported by: Ahmad (hadeeth 7658), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه. It is considered Saheeh (good) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Al-Jaami" (hadeeth 2156).

²³ Soorah al-Baqaraah [2:185]

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["Every slave of Allaah who observes Saum (fasting) for one day for the Sake of Allaah, Allaah will draw his face farther from Hellfire to the extent of a distance to be covered in seventy years."]²⁴.

- **Among its virtues the privilege** given to the fasting people with one of the gates of Paradise which none except them will enter through; an honour for them and a reward for their observance of fasting. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ بَابًا يُقَالُ لَهُ الرَّيَّانُ، يَدْخُلُ مِنْهُ الصَّائِمُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، لَا يَدْخُلُ مِنْهُ أَحَدٌ غَيْرُهُمْ، يُقَالُ: أَيَّنَ الصَّائِمُونَ؟
فَيَقُومُونَ فَيَدْخُلُونَ، فَإِذَا دَخَلُوا أُغْلِقَ فَلَمْ يَدْخُلْ مِنْهُ أَحَدٌ

["There is a gate in paradise called Ar-Rayyaan, and those who observe Saum (fast) will enter through it on the Day of Resurrection and none except them will enter through it. It will be said to them: 'Where are those who used to observe Saum (fast)?' They will get up and none except them will enter through it. After their entry, the gate will be closed and nobody will enter through it."]²⁵.

The whole virtues and features which have been enumerated throughout are just considered as non-exhaustive compared to the interests that Allaah تعالى gives to fasting.

The Benefits of Fasting

As for the benefits of fasting, they have great impacts in the purification of the soul, the refinement of the character and the consolidation of the body. Among them are:

- **The fasting person familiarises himself to patience** and endures to resist things he is accustomed to and to leave his desires willingly and voluntarily so that he would restrain the caprice of his desire and overcome his soul, which is inclined to evil. He curbs his desires to give it the utmost happiness, so that it accepts that with which it would be purified; that with which it leads a happy eternal life. The fasting person narrows the circulations of Shaytaan (Satan) by narrowing the streams of food and drink. He reminds himself of what the circumstances of the starving poor people are. For the love of the Lord of the world, he abandons the things he enjoys i.e. eating and drinking. And this secret between the slave of Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ and his lord [Allaah] is the reality and end of fasting.

- **Saum (fasting) refines the heart** and softens it so that it remembers Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ. Thus, it facilitates it the way of the acts of worship.

- **Among the benefits of fasting is that it leads to piety** (fear of Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ) and to diminish the appeals to desires. Allaah تعالى says: [That you may become Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)]²⁶ in referring to the prescription of observing fasting because it is a reason to reach piety in order to narrow the streams of desires and to deaden them. Since whenever food is little, desire is weak; and sins diminish whenever desire weakens.

²⁴ Reported by: Muslim (hadeeth 2767), An-Nasaa'ee (hadeeth 2260), Ad-Daarimee (hadeeth 2454), from the hadeeth of Aboo Sa'eed Al-Khudree رضي الله عنه.

²⁵ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1896), Muslim (hadeeth 2766), An-Nasaa'ee (hadeeth 2248), and Ibn Maaajah (hadeeth 1709), from the hadeeth of Aboo Haazim Ibn Sahl رضي الله عنه.

²⁶ Soorah al-Baqarah [2:183]

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- **Among its medical benefits;** the health of the body because fasting is a protection against food mixture, which causes diseases. Thus, it preserves -if Allaah wills- external and internal organs as it was stated by the doctors.

The Etiquettes of Fasting

Fasting has etiquettes which are to observe so that there would be agreement with the Islaamic commands in order to purify and refine the soul. Therefore, the fasting person strives to fulfil them perfectly and to stick to them entirely, since his perfect observance of fasting is dependent on them. His happiness depends also on them. Among those etiquettes, that we take into account in observing fasting are:

First: welcoming the month of Ramadhaan with joy, exultation and happiness, because it is from Allaah's favour and His Mercy upon people of Islaam. He تعالى says:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

[Say: 'In the Bounty of Allaah, and in His Mercy (i.e. Islaam and the Qur'aan); therein let them rejoice.' That is better than what (the wealth) they amass.]²⁷

He should thank Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ to be an adult and seek His help for observing fasting and offer good deeds during this month. As it is desirable for him to make Du'aa (invocations) at the sight of every crescent (at the outset of every lunar month) of the year, according to the hadeeth narrated by `Abdullaah Ibn` Umar رضي الله عنهما who said: "At the sight of the new moon (of the lunar month); the Messenger of Allaah صلى الله عليه وسلم used to make this invocation:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُمَّ اهْلُهُ عَلَيْنَا بِالْأَمْنِ وَالْإِيمَانِ وَالسَّلَامَةِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ وَالتَّوْفِيقِ لِمَا نُحِبُّ وَتَرْضَى، رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ

["Allaah is the Most High, O Allaah, let this moon appear on us with security and 'Eemaan (faith), with safety and Islaam, and in agreement with all that You love and pleases You. O (moon) your (Lord) and ours is Allaah"]²⁸,

on condition that he does not face the crescent when invoking Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ, nor does he raise his head up to it, nor does he stand erect for it, but he faces Qiblah when invoking, as he does in Salaah (prayer).

Second: Among the important etiquettes he should observe is not to fast, thinking that it is Ramadhaan before being certain that the month has begun; nor does he continue observing fasting after Ramadhaan ends, thinking that it is of it. He must observe it in its legal due time. He should not precede it nor should he delay it, according to the statement of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

لَا تَصُومُوا حَتَّى تَرَوْا الْهَيْلَالَ، وَلَا تُفْطِرُوا حَتَّى تَرَوْهُ

²⁷ Soorah Yoonus [10:58]

²⁸ Reported by: At-Tirmidhee (hadeeth 3447), Ad-Daarimee (4/2) and Al-Baghawee in "Sharh As-Sunnah" (hadeeth 1335). Ibn Hibbaan considers it Saheeh (authentic) (hadeeth 2375), Al-Albaanee said in "Al-Kalima At-Taiyib" (hadeeth 91) "Saheeh (authentic) by its Shawaahid (versions)".

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["Do not observe Saum (fast) till you see the crescent (of Ramadhaan) and do not terminate it till you see the crescent (of Shawwaal)."]²⁹

He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said:

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْهَلَالَ فَصُومُوا وَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُ فَأَفْطِرُوا

["Start observing Saum (fasts) on seeing the crescent – moon of Ramadhaan and stop observing Saum (fasts) on seeing the crescent – moon of Shawwaal."] ³⁰.

Third: taking Suhoor (predawn meal) due to its blessing and the recommendation of delaying it, according to the following hadeeth:

تَسَحَّرُوا فَإِنَّ فِي السُّحُورِ بَرَكَةً

["Take Suhoor (predawn meal). Surely, there is a blessing in the Suhoor."] ³¹

It was also reported regarding its virtue and blessing that he صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

الْبَرَكَةُ فِي ثَلَاثَةٍ: فِي الْجَمَاعَةِ وَالْتَّرِيدِ وَالسُّحُورِ

["The blessing is in three (things): Al-Jamaa'ah (the communion), Ath-Tharreed (i.e. a meat and bread dish) and Suhoor (predawn meal)."] ³².

And according to the hadeeth of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى الْمُتَسَحِّرِينَ

["Allaah sends His blessings on those who take Suhoor (predawn meal) and also His angels"] ³³

Indeed, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ made Suhoor the element which distinguishes our fasting from that of the People of the Scriptures. He said:

فَصَلُّ مَا بَيْنَ صِيَامِنَا وَصِيَامِ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أَكْلَةُ السَّحْرِ

["The difference between our observance of Saum (fasting) and that of the People of the Scriptures is the Suhoor (predawn meal) in Ramadhaan"] ³⁴.

It would be preferable for the fasting person to eat Suhoor with some dates. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

نِعْمَ سَحُورُ الْمُؤْمِنِ التَّمْرُ

²⁹ The authenticity of this hadeeth is agreed upon. It is reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (4/119), Muslim (7/189, 190, 191), Aboo Daawood (2/740), Ibn Maajah (1/529), An-Nasaa'ee (4/134), Ahmad (2/5, 13, 63) and Maalik in Al-Muwatta' (1/269) according to the hadeeth reported by Ibn `Umar رضي الله عنهما.

³⁰ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1900) and Muslim (hadeeth 1080), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Umar رضي الله عنه.

³¹ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1923) and Muslim (hadeeth 1090), from the hadeeth of Anas Ibn Maalik رضي الله عنه.

³² Al-Mundhree referred to it in "Al-Targheeb" and At-Tabaraanee in "Al-Kabeer" (hadeeth 1546). It is reported by Aboo Taahir Al-Anbaari in "Al-Masheeyakhah" (156/1-20) and Al-Baihaqee in "Ash-Shu'ab" (2/426/2), from the hadeeth of Salmaan رضي الله عنه. It is considered Hassan (good) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 1065) in "As-Silsilah" (36/3) no: (1045).

³³ Reported by At-Tabaraanee in "Al-Awsat" (hadeeth 6434) and Ibn Hibbaan (hadeeth 880), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Umar رضي الله عنهما. It is considered Hassan (good) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Mawaarid Ad-Dam`aan" (hadeeth 738) and in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 1066).

³⁴ Reported by: Muslim (hadeeth 1096), At-Tirmidhee (hadeeth 708), Aboo Daawood (hadeeth 2343) and An-Nasaa'ee (4/146), from the hadeeth of Amr Ibn Al-`Aas رضي الله عنه.

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["The excellent Suhoor (predawn meal) for the believer are dates"]³⁵.

If it is not possible to have any, his Suhoor will be fulfilled even with a gulp of water. He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

تَسَحَّرُوا وَلَوْ بِجُرْعَةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ

["Take Suhoor (predawn mead) even with a gulp of water"]³⁶.

The time of Suhoor starts shortly before dawn and ends when the white thread (light) of dawn appears distinct from the black thread (darkness of night). If the fasting person hears Adhaan (the call to prayer) and his container is in his hand eating or drinking, he has to finish with the food or drink that the utensil contains. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

إِذَا سَمِعَ أَحَدُكُمْ النِّدَاءَ وَالْإِنَاءَ فِي يَدِهِ فَلَا يَضَعُهُ حَتَّى يَقْضِيَ حَاجَتَهُ مِنْهُ

["If any of you hears the Adhaan (the call to Salaah) and the vessel is in the hand of anyone of you, let him not put it down until he has finished with it"]³⁷.

The permission in the hadeeth makes the innovation regarding the start of abstention in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before dawn invalid. Obliging the fasting person to follow some timings of abstention setup in conformity with such an innovation has no source in Sharee'ah and in its etiquettes.

It is recommended to delay Suhoor (predawn meal). The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

إِنَّا مَعَشَرُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ - أُمِرْنَا بِتَعْجِيلِ فِطْرِنَا وَتَأْخِيرِ سُحُورِنَا وَأَنْ نَضَعَ أَيْمَانِنَا عَلَى شِمَائِلِنَا فِي الصَّلَاةِ

["We the Prophets have been commanded to hasten the breaking of our fast and to delay our Suhoor (the time before dawn when we take Suhoor), and to put our right hands over our left when praying"]³⁸.

He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to delay Suhoor the time required for the recitation of fifty verses. Anas رضي الله عنه narrated that Zayd Ibn Thaabit رضي الله عنه said:

تَسَحَّرْنَا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، ثُمَّ قَامَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ، فُلْتُ: كَمْ كَانَ بَيْنَ الْأَذَانِ وَالسُّحُورِ؟ قَالَ: قَدْرَ خَمْسِينَ آيَةً

["We took Suhoor (predawn meal) with the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and then he stood for Salaah (the prayer). I asked, 'What was the interval between the Suhoor (the time before dawn when we take Suhoor) and the Adhaan?' He replied: 'The interval was sufficient to recite fifty verses of the Qur'aan']³⁹.

The companions رضي الله عنهم used to do so as well. 'Amr Ibn Maymoon Al-Awadi said:

³⁵ Reported by: Aboo Daawood (hadeeth 2345) and Ibn Hibbaan (hadeeth 883), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه. It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in "As-Silsilah As-Saheehah" (hadeeth 562) and in "Saheeh Mawaarid Ad-Dham'aan" (hadeeth 731).

³⁶ Reported by: Ibn Hibbaan (hadeeth 884), from the hadeeth of `Abdullaah Ibn `Amr رضي الله عنهما. Al-Albaanee said in "Saheeh Al-Mawaarid" (hadeeth 732): "Hassan Saheeh" (good authentic). [See "As-Silsilah Ad-Dha'eefa" (hadeeth 1405) and "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 1561)].

³⁷ Reported by: Aboo Daawood (hadeeth 2351), Al-Haakim (1/426), Al-Baihaqee (4/218) and Ahmad (2/423, 510), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه. Al-Albaanee said about it: "Hassan Saheeh". [See "Saheeh Sunan Aboo Daawood" (2/57), and "As-Silsilah As-Saheehah" (3/371)].

³⁸ Reported by: Ibn Hibbaan (hadeeth 885), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما. It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Mawaarid Ad-Dham'aan" (hadeeth 733) and in "As-Saheehah" (4/376).

³⁹ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1921) and Muslim (hadeeth 1597), from the hadeeth of Zayd Ibn Thaabit رضي الله عنه.

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كَانَ أَصْحَابُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَسْرَعَ النَّاسِ إِفْطَارًا وَأَبْطَأَهُمْ سُحُورًا

["The Companions of Muhammad were the first to break the Saum (fasting) and the last to take Suhoor (predawn meal)"]⁴⁰.

Fourth: Adherence to hastening to break the fast in order to carry on doing good deeds. The proof is the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ statement:

لَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا عَجَّلُوا الْفِطْرَ

["People will continue to adhere to good as long as they hasten to break the Saum (fasting)"]⁴¹.

And he صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

لَا تَزَالُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى سُنَّتِي مَا لَمْ تَنْتَظِرْ بِفِطْرِهَا النُّجُومَ

["People of My Ummah (nation) will continue to adhere to my Sunnah as long as they do not wait the stars to appear to break the Saum (fasting)"]⁴².

He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said:

لَا يَزَالُ الدِّينُ ظَاهِرًا مَا عَجَّلَ النَّاسُ الْفِطْرَ لِأَنَّ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى يُؤَخَّرُونَ

["The Islaamic religion keeps uppermost as long as people hasten to break the Saum (fasting); in fact the Jews and the Christians delay it"]⁴³

Indeed, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ illustrated its meaning by saying:

إِذَا أَقْبَلَ اللَّيْلُ مِنْ هَا هُنَا، -من جهة الشرق- وَأَدْبَرَ النَّهَارُ مِنْ هَا هُنَا، وَعَرَبَتِ الشَّمْسُ، فَقَدْ أَفْطَرَ الصَّائِمُ

["When the night approaches from this side (i.e. the east) and the day retreats from that side (i.e. the west) and the sun sets, then it is time for a person observing Saum (fasting) to break his fast"]⁴⁴.

The Etiquettes of Fitr (breaking the fast):

Breaking the fast is linked with a number of Islaamic etiquettes, which are recommended for the fasting person to abide by, following the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

1- Breaking the Saum (fasting) happens before Maghrib Salaah (sunset prayer), according to the statement of Anas Ibn Maalik رضي الله عنه:

مَا رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَطُّ صَلَّى صَلَاةَ الْمَغْرِبِ حَتَّى يُفْطِرَ وَلَوْ عَلَى شَرْبَةِ مِنْ مَاءٍ

["I have never seen the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ performed Maghrib Salaah (prayer) before breaking his fast even with a gulp of water"]⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ Reported by: Abdur-Razzaq (hadeeth 7621) and Al-Baihaqee (4/238). It is authenticated by Ibn Hajar in "Al-Fath" (4/199).

⁴¹ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1957) and Muslim (hadeeth 1098), from the hadeeth of Sahl Ibn Sa'd رضي الله عنه.

⁴² Reported by: Ibn Khuzaymah (3/275) and Ibn Hibbaan (hadeeth 891), from the hadeeth of Sahl Ibn Sa'd رضي الله عنه. It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in "As-Silsilah As-Saheehah" (hadeeth 2080) and in "Saheeh Mawaarid Ad-Dham'aan" (hadeeth 738) and "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 01074).

⁴³ Reported by: Aboo Daawood (hadeeth 2353), Ibn Maajah (hadeeth 1698), Ibn Khuzaymah (3/275) and Ibn Hibbaan (hadeeth 889), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه. It is considered Hassan (good) in "Saheeh Mawaarid Ad-Dham'aan" (hadeeth 736) and in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 1075).

⁴⁴ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1954) and Muslim (hadeeth 1100), from the hadeeth of Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab رضي الله عنه.

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2- Breaking his fast with some fresh date-fruits; if there are not any, he will eat dry date-fruits; and if there are not any dry ones, he will drink water, based on the hadeeth narrated by Anas Ibn Maalik رضي الله عنه who reported:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُفْطِرُ عَلَى رُطَبَاتٍ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ رُطَبَاتٍ فَعَلَى تَمْرَاتٍ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ حَسَا حَسَوَاتٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ

["The Messenger of Allaah صلى الله عليه وسلم used to break Saum (fasting) before performing Maghrib prayer with three fresh date-fruits; and if there were no dry date-fruits, he would take three draughts of water."]⁴⁶.

3- Du'aa' (invocations) uttered when breaking the Saum (fast). It is stated that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم used to say when breaking his fast:

دَهَبَ الظَّمَاُ وَابْتَلَّتِ العُرُوْقُ وَنَبَّتِ الأَجْرُ - إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ

["Dhahaba Ad-Dama' u Wa Btallati Al-Urooqu Wa Thabata Al-Ajru In'sha'allaah" (The thirst has gone and the veins are moistened, and reward is confirmed, if Allaah wills)]⁴⁷.

Fifth: Among the etiquettes of fasting also, the recommendation to use Siwaak (stick cleaning for teeth) for a fasting or non-fasting person. It can be used soft or hard, by night or by day, before performing every Salaah (prayer) or making ablution, according to the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم statement:

لَوْلَا أَنْ أَشُقَّ عَلَى أُمَّتِي لِأَمْرَتُهُمْ بِالسِّوَاكِ عِنْدَ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ

["Had I not thought it difficult for the people of my Ummah (nation, community), I would have commanded them to use the Siwaak (stick cleaning for teeth) before every Salaah"]⁴⁸.

In another version:

عِنْدَ كُلِّ وُضُوءٍ

["Before every ablution"]⁴⁹

This evidence does not concern the fasting person only. Ibn`Umar رضي الله عنهما said:

يُسْتَأْكَ أَوَّلَ النَّهَارِ وَآخِرَهُ

["Brushing one's teeth with Siwaak (or Miswaak - stick cleaning for teeth) every day and night"]⁵⁰

Within this ruling, Ibn Taymeeyah may Allaah have mercy on him said: "...as for the Miswaak, it is permissible without any divergence. However, there is a difference in opinion regarding the dislike of using it in the afternoon on two well-known statements of Imaam

⁴⁵ Reported by: Ibn Hibbaan (hadeeth 89), from the hadeeth of Anas Ibn Maalik رضي الله عنه. It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by: Al-Albaanee in "As-Saheehah" (hadeeth 2110) and in "Mawaarid Ad-Dham'aan" (hadeeth 737).

⁴⁶ Reported by: Aboo Daawood (hadeeth 2356) and At-Tirmidhee (hadeeth 696). It is considered Hassan (good) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 1077).

⁴⁷ Reported by: Aboo Daawood (hadeeth 235) and Al-Baihaqee (4/239), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Umar رضي الله عنهما. It is considered Hassan (good) by Al-Albaanee in "Al-Irwaa'" (hadeeth 920).

⁴⁸ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 887), Muslim (hadeeth 612), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رضي الله عنه, Ahmad (4/116), Aboo Daawood (hadeeth 47) and At-Tirmidhee (hadeeth 23), from the hadeeth of Zayd Ibn Khaalid Al-Juhani رضي الله عنه.

⁴⁹ Reported by: Ahmad (2/460, 517). It is considered Hassan (good) by Al-Albaanee in "Al-Irwaa'" (1/110), no. (70).

⁵⁰ See "The Summarise of Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree" by Al-Albaanee (hadeeth 451) no. (366).

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Ahmad. But no Islaamic legal evidence is valid to make the use of Miswaak undesirable in the afternoon"⁵¹.

Sixth: Striving in doing good and intensifying the acts of worship. Indeed, during the month of Ramadhaan, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to do more acts of worship and good actions. He was the kindest and best in treatment. In his hadeeth, Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما said:

كَانَ -أَي: النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- أَجْوَدَ النَّاسِ بِالْخَيْرِ، وَكَانَ أَجْوَدَ مَا يَكُونُ فِي رَمَضَانَ جِئِنَ يَلْقَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ، وَكَانَ جِبْرِيلُ -عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ- يَلْقَاهُ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ فِي رَمَضَانَ حَتَّى يَنْسَلِخَ، يَعْرِضُ عَلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ، فَإِذَا لَقِيَهُ جِبْرِيلُ -عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ- كَانَ أَجْوَدَ بِالْخَيْرِ مِنَ الرِّيحِ الْمُرْسَلَةِ

["The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was the most generous of the men; and he was the most generous during the month of Ramadhaan when Jibreel visited him every night until it ends and recited the Qur'aan to him. During this period, the generosity of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ waxed faster than the rain bearing wind"]⁵².

He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to recite the Qur'aan very much during this month. He prolonged Qiyaam (standing at night to pray) in Ramadhaan more than he صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did out of it. He became more generous than ever in giving charity and gifts and in other sorts of kindness. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ strived harder in the last ten days and nights of this month—in observing I'tikaaf (seclusion in the mosque), in Qiyaam (standing to pray at night), reciting the Qur'aan and in remembering Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ more than he did in the rest of the year. It was reported in the hadeeth:

إِذَا دَخَلَ الْعَشْرُ شَدَّ مِنْزَرَهُ، وَأَحْيَا لَيْلَهُ، وَأَيْقَظَ أَهْلَهُ

["When the last ten nights (of Ramadhaan) would begin, he would prepare himself to be more diligent in worship, keep awake at night (for prayer and devotion) and awaken his family"]⁵³.

Among the acts of worship that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ recommended Muslims to achieve is performing 'Umrah (lesser Hajj) in Ramadhaan. It has a great reward that equals to a reward of Hajj. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

عُمْرَةٌ فِي رَمَضَانَ تَعْدِلُ حَجَّةً

["An 'Umrah in Ramadhaan is equal to a Hajj (in reward)"]⁵⁴.

The reward of performing Salaah (prayer) in the Mosque of Makkah and Al-Madeenah is multiplied. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

⁵¹ "The Whole Fataawa" by Ibn Taymeeyah (25/266), Al-Haafidh said in "At-Talkhees" (2/202) that `Abdurrahman Ibn Ghanam reported "I asked Mu'aadh Ibn Jabal: 'Can I brush my teeth with the Miswaak while observing Saum (fasting)?' He said: 'Yes'. I said: 'Which part of the day?' He said: 'Any part of the day; in the morning or in the evening'. I said: 'Other people say that it is undesirable in the afternoon.' He said: 'Why.' I said: 'They say that the Messenger of Allaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: 'The breath of one observing Saum is sweeter to Allaah than the fragrance of musk'. He said: 'Subhaanallaah (Allaah is glorified)! The Messenger of Allaah commanded them to use Miswaak knowing that the breath of the fasting person is sweeter after using it. He did not command them to infect their mouths deliberately. There is nothing good in it, but just evil, except those who are afflicted and have no choice'".

⁵² Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 3220) and Muslim (hadeeth 2307), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما.

⁵³ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 2024) and Muslim (hadeeth 1174), from the hadeeth of `A'ishah رضي الله عنها.

⁵⁴ Reported by: Aboo Daawood (2/503). It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Aboo Daawood" (hadeeth 1988). It is reported by Al-Tirmidhee in a summarised way (3/276) and Ibn Maaajah (2/996), from the hadeeth of Aboo Ma'qil رضي الله عنه.

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صَلَاةٌ فِي مَسْجِدِي هَذَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ صَلَاةٍ فِيْمَا سِوَاهُ إِلَّا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ

["One Salaah (prayer) in my mosque is better than one thousand prayers in any other mosque except Al-Masjid Al-Haraam"]⁵⁵.

In addition, the committed sins and evil acts are expiated thanks to successive 'Umrahs. It was stated that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

الْعُمْرَةُ إِلَى الْعُمْرَةِ كَفَّارَةٌ لِمَا بَيْنَهُمَا

["Performing 'Umrah is expiation for the sins committed between it and the previous one"]⁵⁶.

Seventh: Avoiding things which prevent achieving the objective of fasting, looking out for all that the Islaamic Sharee'ah prohibits, such as evil words and foul deeds which are forbidden and disliked all the time, especially in Ramadhāan. Their wickedness is greater in punishment for the fasting person during this month. For this reason, he has to keep his tongue from bad speech, such as lying, backbiting, calamity, insults, and disputes and from losing his time in reciting poems, telling tales and riddles, praising and disparaging wrongly. It is also obligatory upon him to prevent his hearing from tending his ear to them and listening to what is legally ugly and disapproved. He has to work hard to keep his soul and body away from desires and prohibitions, such as lowering the gaze from looking at forbidden things and preserving the other parts of the body from committing sins. He should not stretch his hand to falsehood or even walk to it. He has to eat only lawful food with moderation and without excess in order to curb his soul from desires and to fortify it against Satan and its helpers. In addition to that, his heart should remain –after breaking his fast and at the end of every act of worship– between hoping to see his fasting accepted by Allaah تَعَالَى to be among those brought near to Him and fearing that it might be rejected and then he would be among hated people.

Indeed, many texts in Sharee'ah reported in this regard. They warn the fasting person against the evil of the tongue and of the other parts of the body. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ حَاجَةٌ فِي أَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ

["Whoever does not give up lying speech (false statements) and acting on those lies and evil actions etc; Allaah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink [i.e. Allaah will not accept his Saum (fasting)]"]⁵⁷.

The aim of observing fasting in Islaam is not in the nature of hunger and thirst, but is what goes with it like abstaining from desires, rendering the soul which is inclined to evil a complete rested and satisfied soul. For this purpose, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

رُبَّ صَائِمٍ لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ صِيَامِهِ إِلَّا الْجُوعُ، وَرُبَّ قَائِمٍ لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ قِيَامِهِ إِلَّا السَّهَرُ

["There are people who fast and get nothing from their fast except hunger, and there are those who pray Qiyaam (standing to pray at night) and get nothing from their Qiyaam but a sleepless night."]⁵⁸.

⁵⁵ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1190) and Muslim (hadeeth 1394), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

⁵⁶ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1773) and Muslim (hadeeth 1349), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

⁵⁷ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1903), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

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The true fasting person is the one whose stomach abstains from all kinds of food, the parts of his body from committing sins, his tongue from harsh and foul language, his hearing from absurdity, his sex from intercourse with his woman and his sight from looking at forbidden things. When he speaks, he does not utter words which hurt his fasting; and if he does, he will not say things which spoil his fast. His speech will be beneficial and his deeds will be righteous and good. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى: كُلُّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ آدَمَ لَهُ إِلَّا الصِّيَامَ، فَإِنَّهُ لِي وَأَنَا أَجْزِي بِهِ. وَالصِّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ، وَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمَ صَوْمِ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلَا يَرْفُثْ وَلَا يَصْخَبْ، فَإِنْ سَابَهُ أَحَدٌ أَوْ قَاتَلَهُ فَلْيَقُلْ إِنِّي صَائِمٌ

["Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said: 'Every act of the son of Aadam is for him, except Saum (fasting) which is (exclusively) for Me and I will reward him for it.' Fasting is a shield. When anyone of you is observing fast, he should neither indulge in obscene language nor should he raise his voice, and if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him, he should say: 'I am a fasting person'"]⁵⁹.

In another hadeeth Marfoo' (Elevated):

لَا تُسَابَّ وَأَنْتَ صَائِمٌ، فَإِنْ سَابَكَ أَحَدٌ فَقُلْ: إِنِّي صَائِمٌ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ قَائِمًا فَاجْلِسْ

["Do not revile while fasting, and if anyone reviles you, say I am fasting; and sit down if you are standing..."]⁶⁰.

The fasting person might not reach the reward of his Saum (fast) despite his endurance to hunger and thirst because he did not abandon the prohibited acts. The reward of fasting decreases by committing sins, and will be invalid only by doing things which spoil it. In the preceding hadeeths, there is an incitation of the fasting person to forgive wrong people errors and to avoid replying to others' evil.

Eighth: Getting ready to serve the fasting persons meals or something to break their fasts in order to request similar reward to theirs. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said in referring to its merit:

مَنْ فَطَرَ صَائِمًا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِهِ، غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَنْقُصْ مِنْ أَجْرِ الصَّائِمِ شَيْئًا

["He who provides a fasting person something with which to break his fast, will earn the same reward as the one who was observing the fast, without diminishing in any way the reward of the latter"]⁶¹.

Ninth: Guarding the optional night prayer (Taraaweeh) in congregation and adhering to its performance. If he does not join it or he abandons it, he will miss a great reward. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ exhorted his Companions رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ to perform Qiyaam (standing for prayer at night) in Ramadhaan without ordering them. He said:

مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُورَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

⁵⁸ Reported by Ibn Maajah (1/539), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Ibn Maajah" (hadeeth 1380) and in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 1079).

⁵⁹ Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree (hadeeth 1904) and Muslim (hadeeth 1151), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

⁶⁰ Reported by Ibn Khuzaymah in his "Saheeh" (3/241). Al-Albaanee said in "Saheeh Mawaarid Ad-Dham'aan" (1/383): "It was reported in the "Saheeh" except the statement: "and sit down if you are standing": Hassan (good)."

⁶¹ Reported by At-Tirmidhee (3/171), and Ibn Maajah (1/555), from the hadeeth of Zayd Ibn Khaalid Al-Juhani رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh At-Tirmidhee" (hadeeth 807), and "Saheeh Ibn Maajah" (hadeeth 1746).

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["Whosoever stood to pray (Taraaweeh) in Ramadhaan with perfect faith and seeking reward, he will have his previous sins forgiven"]⁶²,

especially in the last ten days of Ramadhaan where there is a night which is better than a thousand months. Allaah تعالى will provide those who perform its Qiyaam a great reward and their past sins will be forgiven. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

["Whosoever performed Qiyaam during Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree) with faith and being hopeful of Allaah's reward, he will have his former sins forgiven"]⁶³.

It was reported regarding the virtue of performing Qiyaam in congregation that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ إِذَا صَلَّى مَعَ الْإِمَامِ حَتَّى يَنْصَرِفَ كُتِبَ لَهُ قِيَامُ لَيْلَةٍ

["Whosoever pray Qiyaam with the Imaam until he finishes, it will be recorded for him that he spent the whole night in prayer."] ⁶⁴.

For that merit, the fasting person should not neglect the Qiyaam of Ramadhaan in congregation in order not to miss this great blessing and abundant reward.

Conclusion

Finally, the Muslim must show great concern to his religion and care about what corrects it from heresies in order to get the benefits issuing from it, especially the pillars of Islaam and its great bases such as Saum (fasting during Ramadhaan), which is repeated in the Muslim's lifetime once a year. The Muslim whom Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ granted success to observe the fasting of Ramadhaan, to pray Qiyaam of its night with sincerity and adherence to the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Sunnah has to end up with asking Allaah's forgiveness and submitting himself to Him تعالى. Seeking forgiveness is the ending to all [good] deeds and acts of worship. The Muslim should not be self-conceited and proud of his deeds, nor should he consider them pure. He should admit that his deeds are short and neglected in the right of Allaah and that they could be refused or accepted. The Salaf used to strive hard to perform complete and perfect deeds. Then they became preoccupied with the acceptance of their deeds and feared that their actions would be rejected. Allaah تعالى qualified them in saying:

يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجَلَةٌ

[And those who give that (their charity) which they give (and also do other good deeds) with their hearts full of fear (whether their alms and charities have been accepted or not).]⁶⁵

⁶² This hadeeth is previously reported.

⁶³ This hadeeth is previously reported.

⁶⁴ Reported by: Aboo Daawood (2/105), At-Tirmidhee (3/169), and An-Nasaa'ee (3/202-203), from the hadeeth of Aboo Dhar Al-Ghifaari رضي الله عنه. It is considered Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Aboo Daawood" (hadeeth 1375) and in "Saheeh At-Tirmidhee" (hadeeth 806).

⁶⁵ Soorah al-Mu'minoon [23:60].

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They did not feel secure because they feared the plot of Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ very much. They –with the fear of non-acceptance– begged Allaah’s forgiveness and repented a lot, hoping that Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ would have accepted their deeds rather than showing concern to them, because the acceptance is the sign of piety (fear of Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ). Allaah تعالى says:

إِنَّمَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

[Verily, Allaah accepts only from those who are Al-Muttaqoon (the pious).]⁶⁶

If the hypocrite rejoices with the end of Ramadhaan to devote himself to desires and sins, which he missed all along the month, the believer rejoices to see Ramadhaan over, after completing his good deeds with perfection, hoping to assure its rewards and the merits of fasting, pursuing with beseeching Allaah’s forgiveness, saying Takbeer (Allaahu Akbar) and performing acts of worship. Indeed, Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ prescribed to ask Allaah’s forgiveness, which is the slogan of the Prophets عليهم السلام linked to Tawheed (Islaamic Monotheism). The Muslim is in need to them so that his deeds would be based on Tawheed. In Seeking Allaah’s Forgiveness, he purifies his deeds, his vanity and all that afflicts them such as negligence, defect or error.

In this context in which Tawheed (Islaamic Monotheism) and seeking Allaah’s forgiveness are linked, Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ says:

فَاعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ

[So know (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) that Laa Ilaaha Illa Allaah (none has the right to be worshiped but Allaah), and ask forgiveness for your sin , and also for (the sin of) believing men and believing women. And Allaah knows well your moving about, and your place of rest (in your homes).]⁶⁷

And He تعالى said concerning Yoonus (Jonah) عليه السلام :

فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

[But he cried through the darkness (saying); Laa illaaha Illa Anta [None has the right to be worshiped but You (O, Allaah)] Glorified (and Exalted) are You [above all that (evil) they associate with you]. Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers]⁶⁸

We ask Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ to provide us with the good of this month and its blessing, to provide us with its virtues and its promised rewards and not to deprive us of good deeds during this sacred month and others. As we ask Him عزَّ وجلَّ success, pertinence, acceptance of our (good) deeds and pardon for our negligence. All praise be to Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessings of Allaah are upon Muhammad, his Family, Companions and Fellow-Brothers till the Day of Recompense.

Algiers: Rajab 17th, 1426H. Corresponding to August 22nd, 2005

⁶⁶ Soorah al-Maa'idah [5:27].

⁶⁷ Soorah Muhammad [47:19].

⁶⁸ Soorah al-Ambeeyaa' [21:87]