



The Book Of FASTING

—Egypt's Dar Al-Iftaa—



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Introduction

Praise be to Allah and may His peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, after whom there is no other messenger, and may peace and blessings be upon his family, Companions and those who follow him until the Day of Resurrection

The month of Ramadan is one of the 12 months of the Islamic calendar. Allah Almighty says, **“The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve (in a year)—so ordained by Him the day He created the heavens and the earth”** [*At-Tauba*, 36].

Allah distinguished Ramadan from the rest of the months by revealing the Qur`an in it, prescribing its fast for Muslims, and bestowing it with certain virtues that are absent in the other months. Consequently, Ramadan is a month when a person is to hasten to do good deeds, attain the best of rewards, and make up missed actions and duties. Allah Almighty says, **“Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur`an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So everyone of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting”** [*Al-Baqarah*, 185].

The word 'Ramadan' comes from '*ramad*', meaning intense heat on sun-scorched sand and other surfaces. Al-Layth defined the word as the scorching of oppressive heat from the word '*ramada`*'. The word Ramadan derives from this meaning because when names were given to months, they were called after the time of year in which they occurred and Ramadan coincided with a time of intense heat. It was said that the word 'ramadan' is derived from the sensation of the parched thirst of a fasting person or because it scorches sins. The plural of 'ramadan' [in Arabic] is 'ramadanat'.¹

¹ See *Jamharat Al-Lugha*, *Tahdheeb Al-Lugha* and *Al-Muhit*.

Ramadan is to the other months what Prophet Yusuf was to the sons of Ya'qub

It was said that the 12 months of the Islamic calendar are like the sons of Ya'qub and that the month of Ramadan is to the other months what Yusuf was to his brothers. Just as Yusuf was the most beloved son to Ya'qub, so is Ramadan the most beloved month to Allah.

It is worthy to note that Yusuf was generous and forgiving and these characteristics mitigated his brothers' hostility when he told them, **“This day let no reproach be (cast) on you”** [*Yusuf*, 92].

In the same vein, the month of Ramadan surpasses other months for it includes mercy, blessings, bounties and good, salvation from hellfire, and forgiveness from the All Powerful.

The brothers of Yusuf relied on him to amend their troubles and remove hardships after they were sinful and in error. He was most charitable towards them, remedied their circumstances, and gave them hope. He gave them food when they were hungry and allowed them to return to their home. He told his servants, **“And (Joseph) told his servants to put their stock-in-trade (with which they had bartered) into their saddle-bags, so that they should know it only when they returned to their people”** [*Yusuf*, 62].

In this manner, one person (Yusuf) rectified the errors of eleven (his brothers). Similarly, Ramadan is but one month among eleven others. However, during this month, a person strives to compensate for his shortcomings during the other months.

After he lost his son, Ya'qub still had eleven other male children left. They were with him and he knew of their affairs, conditions, and what was apparent of their actions. In spite of this, his sight did not return to him except he put Yusuf's shirt over his eyes. Similarly, a sinful person who smells the fragrance of Ramadan, sits with those who make remembrance of Allah and reads the Qur`an, and forsakes backbiting and slander, will be forgiven. He will draw close to Allah after he was

distant and see with his heart after he was blind. He will delight in his proximity to Allah and will receive the reward of Divine mercy, forgiveness, and pleasure.

O brothers! Take occasion of this bounty during these days and you will receive abundant reward, an exalted station, and tranquility. By Allah! This is abundant relief, the enduring station, High Paradise, joyful blessings and a life of satisfaction that cannot be attained except by the due reverence for this month that is exalted by Allah.²

The Merit of Ramadan

Allah the Almighty distinguished this noble month with numerous merits, benefits, and blessings. These include:

1- The obligation to fast

Allah prescribed fasting upon Muslims and says, **“O ye who believe! Fasting was prescribed to you”** [*Al-Baqarah*, 183].

Fasting is one of the pillars of Islam without which a person's religion is incomplete. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Islam is built upon five ... and fasting Ramadan."³

Fasting is distinguished from other acts of worship because it is one of the pillars of Islam and because it comprises numerous merits. Allah chose the month of Ramadan, the best of times, for the performance of this act of worship. He accorded it with superiority by distinguishing it from the rest of the months with abundant universal and Divine virtues. In this month, Allah forgives His servants and obliterates their sins in abundance, erases lapses, exalts stations, multiplies good deeds, answers prayers and liberates from hellfire many of those who deserve to enter it. In addition, Allah engulfs the fasters with His pleasure, bounties, and gifts. Consequently, this month is furnished with abundant

² Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Bustan Al-Arifeen*, p. 317-9.

³ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (1/12) and by Muslim (1/ 45).

forgiveness, blessings, universal good, and mercy. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The master of all months is Ramadan."⁴

2-The Qur`an was revealed in this this month

Allah has chosen this month in which to reveal the Holy Qur`an. He says, **"Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur`an as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong)"** [*Al-Baqarah*, 185].

Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "The Qur`an was revealed in its entirety from the Preserved Tablet on the Night of Power in the month of Ramadan. It was brought down to a station in the lowest heavens, Baytul Izza, and later revealed to Muhammad through Jibril in segments—when the need arose—over a period of 23 years."⁵

The Holy Qur`an, the word of Allah the Almighty, was transmitted by *tawatur* (successive transmission) from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and later transcribed. It is the greatest and eternal miracle that attests to the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ and even its shortest verse is inimitable. The Qur`an comprises the laws that regulate the universe and which are valid for all time and place.

Allah chose to reveal the Holy scriptures that preceded the Qur`an in the month of Ramadan. It was reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The Scriptures of Ibrahim were revealed on the first night of Ramadan; the Torah on 6th night of Ramadan and the Bible on 13th night of Ramadan. The Furqan (the Qur`an) was revealed on 24th night of Ramadan."⁶ This demonstrates the merit of the month of Ramadan and its superiority over the rest of the months.

3- The whole universe welcomes the advent of Ramadan and its numerous bounties

⁴ Recorded by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer* (9/205) and by al-Baihaqi in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (3/355).

⁵ See *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (5/127).

⁶ Recorded by imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* (4/107).

In Ramadan, the gates of benefaction are opened and the gates of evil are closed. This explains the words of the Prophet ﷺ who said, "When Ramadan comes, the gates of paradise are opened, the gates of hellfire are closed and the devils are chained."⁷ The word 'opened' may be interpreted literally to signify the blessings of the month and the rewards which are expected to ensue to those who do good during this month. It may likewise refer to the numerous rewards awarded for fasting and observing this month and the rewards of good deeds done during this month that lead to paradise. These words are similar to the words said to those facing an enemy in battle, "The gates of paradise have been opened before you" i.e. you have been granted an act that will lead you to paradise. The words "the gates of hellfire are closed" are a reference to the abundance of forgiveness granted by Allah to His servants and to the elimination of sins.⁸

A question may arise that if the devils are indeed chained during Ramadan, evil and sin would not be committed. The answer is that this would indeed be the case for those who observe the conditions of fasting and its morals. It was said that not all the devils are chained but only the most rebellious of them i.e. the purpose is to diminish evil during this month. It is obvious that evil is committed to a much lesser degree in this blessed month than in any other. It was also maintained that chaining all the devils does not necessarily eliminate evil and sin since there are other influential factors such as the *nafs* [ego], offensive habits, and human devils.⁹

It is possible that the chaining of the devils is used figuratively to indicate the devils' diminished ability to tempt people and to adorn their whims and desires. Consequently, Allah protects Muslims or most Muslims from the commission of sins since, during this month, the devils cannot easily access people and incite them to sin as they do during the rest of the year.¹⁰

⁷ Recorded by Muslim (2/758), Al-Nisa`i in his *Sunan* (4/126), and Ahmed Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (2/357).

⁸ *Al-Muntaqqa Sharh Al-Muwatta`* (2/75).

⁹ Al-'Ayni. *Umdat Al-Qari` Sharh Sahih Bukhari*, (10/386).

¹⁰ Ibn Abdul Bar. *Al-Istidhkar*, (3/377).

Allah the Almighty distinguished all the nights of Ramadan with Divine prayers and bounties. During the night, beams of Divine light descend upon Allah's creation. The Prophet ﷺ said, "On the first night of Ramadan, all the gates of paradise are opened and not a single one of them is closed during the entire month. The gates of hellfire are closed and not a single one of them is opened and the most rebellious devils are chained. On each night of Ramadan until the break of day, an announcer will proclaim from the lower heavens, ' O you who seek beneficence! Come forward! O you who seek evil! Refrain! Is there anyone who seeks forgiveness that he may be forgiven? Is there any who seeks to repent that he may be granted repentance? Is there any who seeks to have his prayers answered? Is there any anyone who wishes to have his supplications accepted? By Allah! Each day at the time of breaking the fast, Allah liberates people from hellfire."¹¹

4- It includes *Laylut ul-Qadr*

Allah the Almighty distinguished the month of Ramadan by *Laylut ul-Qadr*, the Night of Power, i.e. the night on which the Qur`an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad. The superiority of this night over all of the other nights is mentioned in the Qur`an. Allah describes Ramadan as a blessed month and better than a thousand months; He says, **“We sent it down on a blessed month: For We (ever) wish to warn (against evil)”** [*Ad-Dukhan*, 3] and **“We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power: And what will explain to thee what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand Months. Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand: Peace! ... This until the rise of Morn!”** [*Al-Qadr*, 1-5].

This Qur`anic chapter demonstrates that good deeds performed during this month are better than those performed in a thousand months that lack *Laylut ul-Qadr*. This is only because Allah the Almighty wishes to bestow His favors, provisions, and all kinds of good and blessings on His creation at this time.¹²

¹¹ Recorded by Ibn Shaheen in *Fada'il Shahr Ramadan*, p. 34.

¹² Abdul Rahman Al-Kamali. *Al-Mawa'idh AL-Sunniyya li Ayam Shar Ramadan Al-Bahiyya*, p. 148.

5- The month of Ramadan is distinguished with many commendable deeds that are emphasized during this month

The special favors, blessings, mercies, and manifestations of good included in this month confirm that good deeds are rewarded with Divine bounties. Acts that are emphasized and whose rewards are multiplied during this month apart from any other include:

- Studying and reciting the Qur`an in abundance, especially at night. Allah the Almighty says, **“Truly the rising of night is a time when impression is more keen and speech more certain”** [*Al-Muzzammil*, 6].

The words 'rising by night' refer to those people whose spirits are fostered and disciplined by spending the night reciting the Qur`an. It also refers to the spiritual gains and insights revealed and inspired by the darkness of night as Imam Al-Razi maintains in his exegesis.¹³ These sincere souls that have been fostered, disciplined and refined through the light of night recitations are more receptive and steadfast as they are more perceptive, more understanding of the Qur`an, and more successful in their spiritual pursuits. They are granted sincerity in purpose, rightness in words, and their prayers are accepted as attested to by the hadith, "The most honorable of my community are the bearers of the Qur`an and those who spend the night in worship."¹⁴ In another authentic recitation, the verse refers to those who are in greatest harmony [with the Qur`an]."

There is a similarity between the harmony that exists between the heart, tongue, and limbs during night recitations, and the concordance between the exhortation to recite the Qur`an by night and Allah's will to reveal it at night. The more a Muslim recites the Qur`an at night, the more he comes in harmony with the universe. This harmony increases and virtues multiply by virtue of night recitations in Ramadan until the advent of *Laylut ul-Qadr* that is greater than a thousand nights.¹⁵ It was

¹³ *Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, (30/175-6).

¹⁴ Recorded by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer* (12/125) and Al-Baihaqi in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (2/556).

¹⁵ Article by Dr. Ali Goma, the Mufti of Egypt, entitled: "The month of the Qur`an and Nashi`at al-Layl" published in *Al-Ahram* 15-8-2009.

stated in a hadith that Jibril (peace be upon him) would meet the Prophet ﷺ each night in the month of Ramadan to recite the Qur`an."¹⁶

- Completing the Qur`an

The *salaf* (may Allah be pleased with them) were keen to complete the entire Qur`an during the month of Ramadan, following the example of the Prophet ﷺ. Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "Jibril used to meet the Prophet ﷺ and recite the Qur`an to him once every Ramadan, except for the year in which the Prophet ﷺ passed away when he recited it twice to him."¹⁷ A man once asked the Prophet ﷺ, "Which deed is more beloved to Allah?" He replied, "*Al-hal al-Murtahil*." The man asked, "O Messenger of Allah! What is *al-hal al-murtahil*?" He replied, "Reciting the Qur`an from *surat* al-Fatiha to its end and from its end to its beginning. Whenever a person finishes a complete recitation, he starts over without delay."¹⁸

It was reported that Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) completed the Qur`an once every three nights and devoted very little time to it during the day."¹⁹ Aswad an-Nakh'i completed it once every two nights during the month of Ramadan,²⁰ Qatada once every three nights during the month of Ramadan and once a night in the last ten days of Ramadan,²¹ and Aly al-Azdiy completed it once every night during the month of Ramadan.²²

- Sadaqah

It is one of the greatest rewardable acts. Allah the Almighty says, "**Hurry towards your Lord's forgiveness and a Garden as wide as the heavens and the earth prepared for the righteous, who give, both in prosperity and adversity, who restrain their anger and pardon people—God loves those who do good**" [*Al-'Imran*, 133-4].

¹⁶ Recorded by Bukhari (1/6) and by Muslim (4/1803).

¹⁷ Recorded by Bukhari in *Khuluq Af'al Al-'Ibad*, p. 74 and by Is-haq Ibn Rahwiyya in his *Musnad* (5/6).

¹⁸ Recorded by Al-Darami in his *Sunan* (2/560).

¹⁹ *Shu'ab Al-Iman*, (2/398).

²⁰ Recorded by Abdul Razeq in his *Musannaf*, (1/565).

²¹ Mohammed Ibn Nasr Al-Maruzi. *Qiyam Ramadan*, p. 145.

²² Recorded by Ibn Abu Shaybah in his *Musannaf*, (2/386).

The Prophet ﷺ said, "If one of you gives out in charity the measure of a date from lawful gains (and Allah does not accept save that which is lawful) Allah will take it in His right hand and augment its reward in the same manner as you would care for a foal, until it becomes as great as a mountain."²³ The reference to the foal in the hadith is due to the meticulous care it requires.

A *sadaqah* incurs great blessings upon the benefactor as well as upon those who participate in it in whatever manner—the reward and benevolence encompasses them all even if their contribution is little. The legal precinct for this is the hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah the Almighty will admit three [kinds of people] to paradise on account of giving out a morsel of bread, a handful of dates, or something similar that benefits the indigent. He will admit into paradise the head of the household who orders the donation, his wife who prepares it, and the servant who hands it out." The Prophet ﷺ then said, "Praise be to Allah for not excluding our servants."²⁴

Though in general the reward of charity is great, it is even greater during the month of Ramadan. It was reported that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) asked the Prophet ﷺ, "Which charity is better?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "A charity made in Ramadan."²⁵

It is recommended to provide in abundance for the poor during Ramadan. This is because Ramadan is a time when Divine grants and favors are showered upon Muslims and the light of the Qur`an increases, inviting towards munificence. A person must therefore emulate the generosity of Allah the Almighty. It is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ was most generous during this month. Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most generous of people. He was even more so in Ramadan when Jibril would visit him each night and teach him the Qur`an until the break of

²³ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/511) and by Muslim (2/702).

²⁴ Recorded by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat*, (5/278).

²⁵ Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan* (3/51)

dawn. During this time, the Prophet ﷺ was more generous than the strong wind [in his haste and readiness to do charitable deeds]."²⁶

- At-Tarawih Prayer

The Prophet ﷺ established the practice of *tarawih* prayer while 'Umar established the manner of its performance. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever spends the nights of Ramadan in prayer out of sincere faith and seeking the reward of Allah, will have all his previous sins forgiven."²⁷ Al-Hakem reported through al-Nu'man Ibn Bashir (may Allah be pleased with them) that he said, "We spent one third of the eve of the twenty third day of Ramadan with the Prophet ﷺ in prayer. We then prayed with him the eve of the twenty fifth until midnight and the eve of the twenty seventh until midnight until we thought we would miss *al-falah* [the pre-dawn meal]. We called it *falah* but you call it *suhur*." Al-Hakem said, "The report contains clear proof that it is a *sunnah* to pray the *tarawih* in mosques." 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) continued to urge 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) to hold this *sunnah* until he complied."²⁸

- Breaking another's fast

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever breaks another's fast will earn his selfsame reward without diminishing the latter's fast in the slightest."²⁹ It is not a condition for a Muslim to be lavish to the point of overburdening himself when breaking the fast of another. The reward is earned by offering a faster the simplest foodstuff. The aim is to accustom Muslims to unify, show solidarity, and congregate during the time of breaking the fast which is a time for supplicating Allah, a time when prayers are answered, and a time of joy (over breaking the fast). The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever breaks the fast of another, will have his sins forgiven and will be saved from hellfire; he will earn the same reward as the faster without decreasing the latter's reward in the

²⁶ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/672) and Muslim (4/1803).

²⁷ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (1/22) and Muslim (1/523).

²⁸ *Al-Mustadrak 'ala Al-Sahihayn* (1/607).

²⁹ Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan* (3/171) and by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (4/114).

slightest." They (the Companions) asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Not all of us can afford food with which to break another's fast." The Prophet ﷺ replied, "Allah gives this reward to anyone who breaks another's fast with as little as a sip of milk, a date, or a mouthful of water. And whoever satiates the hunger of a fasting person, will have his sins forgiven. His Lord will give him to drink from my basin after which time he will never thirst and he will earn the same reward as the fasting person without diminishing the latter's reward in the slightest."³⁰

- Going for *'umrah*

A *'umrah* performed during the month of Ramadan is equivalent to a *hajj* in reward though it does not waive the obligation of *hajj*. The Prophet ﷺ said, "A *'umrah* performed in Ramadan is equal to a *hajj*."³¹ A differently worded hadith adds the words, "... is equivalent to a *hajj* with me." Ibn Al-'Arabi said, "This hadith is authentic. It is a favor and benefaction from Allah. A *'umrah* in the month of Ramadan attains the rank of *hajj*." This is because the reward of deeds is multiplied through their [occurrence] at blessed times, sincerity of intention, or presence of heart."³²

- Celebrating the eve of *Laylat ul-Qadr*

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever observes *Laylat ul-Qadr* out of faith and in expectation of its reward will have his previous sins forgiven."³³ The Prophet ﷺ also warned against the great loss of forfeiting the virtue of this night and said, "Verily, the month of Ramadan has come to you. It includes a night that is better than a thousand nights. Whoever is deprived [of observing this night] is deprived of all good. None is deprived of the good it entails except those who are truly unfortunate."³⁴

- Making supererogatory deeds in abundance

³⁰ Recorded by Ibn Khuzayma in his *Sahih* (3/191).

³¹ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/631) and Muslim (2917).

³² See *Fat-h Al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar (3/604-5).

³³ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/672).

³⁴ Recorded by Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* (1/526).

Acts of worship performed in Ramadan include benefits and their rewards are multiplied. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever draws close to Allah by performing a good deed during this month will receive the same reward as one who has performed an obligatory act of worship at any other time. And whoever performs an obligatory act in this month will receive the same reward as that of seventy obligatory acts of worship performed at any other time."³⁵ Supererogatory acts of worship include making *dhikr* [remembrance of Allah] in abundance because it illuminates the heart and senses. Al-Zuhari said, "Glorifying Allah once in Ramadan is better than glorifying Him a thousand times at any other time."³⁶

- Making *i'tikaf* [spiritual retreat]

I'tikaf, especially in the last ten days of Ramadan, is a confirmed *sunnah*. The *Sahih* of Bukhari and *Sahih* of Muslim mention that the Prophet ﷺ used to make *i'tikaf* during the last ten days of Ramadan until he passed away and his wives continued to make *i'tikaf* after he died.³⁷

Congratulating others on the occasion of the advent of Ramadan

Due to the virtue of this great month, the prevalence of mercy and the abundance of Divine favors, it is only befitting that people congratulate each another on its advent. It is sanctioned in Islamic law and recommended for Muslims to exchange congratulations on the occasion of feasts, months, or years. Allah the Almighty says, **"Say: "In the bounty of Allah. And in His mercy,--in that let them rejoice": that is better than the (wealth) they hoard"** [*Yunus*, 58].

Congratulating others is a manifestation of joy; the Qur`an mentions the joy people experience at the blessings they receive. Allah the Almighty says, **"(To them will be said:) "Eat and drink ye, with profit and health, because of your (good) deeds"** [*At-Tur*, 19].

³⁵ Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah in his *Sahih* (3/191).

³⁶ Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan* (5/514) and Ibn Abu Shaybah in his *Musannaf* (7/137).

³⁷ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/713) and by Muslim (2/830).

The Prophet ﷺ used to congratulate his Companions upon the advent of Ramadan. Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would give glad tidings to his Companions and say, 'Ramadan has come to you, it is a blessed month.'"³⁸ Scholars have maintained the recommendation of exchanging congratulations on the renewal of religious benefactions. The Shafi'i scholar and hadith master, Al-'Iraqi, said, "It is recommended to be the first to congratulate another on the occasion of a manifest bounty or the repulsion of a manifest calamity."³⁹

Ibn Hajar al-Haythami mentioned that exchanging congratulations is sanctioned and said, "The general permissibility of exchanging greeting with others on the occasion of a blessing or the repulsion of an evil is based on the permissibility of the prostration of gratitude and on the permissibility of condolences. Further evidence is found in the story of Ka'b Ibn Malik's repentance as recounted in the *Sahih* of Bukhari and the *Sahih* of Muslim. Ka'ab did not join the battle of Tabuk and when the Prophet ﷺ conveyed to him Allah's forgiveness, Talha Ibn 'Ubaidullah (may Allah be pleased with him) stood up to congratulate him."⁴⁰

Citing Ibn Hajar, Al-Qalyubi said that it is recommended to exchange greetings with others on religious feasts, months, and years.⁴¹ Al-Bajjuri mentioned this as the established opinion.⁴²

Abu 'Abdullah Ibn Muflih al-Maqdisi, the Hanbali scholar, said, "It is desirable to congratulate others on renewed religious bounties; this is based on the story of Ka'b Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that was mentioned in the *Sahih* of Bukhari and the *Sahih* of Muslim.

³⁸ Recorded by Al-Nisa'i (4/129), Ahmed Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (2/230) and Is-haq Ibn Rahwiyya in his *Musnad* (1/73).

³⁹ *Tarh Al-Tathrib* (8/69).

⁴⁰ *Mughni Al-Muhtaj ila Mi'rifat Alfadh Al-Minhaj* (1/596). The hadith was recorded by Bukhari (4/1603) and by Muslim (4/2120).

⁴¹ *Hashiyat Qalyubi wa Umayra* (1/359).

⁴² *Hashiyat Al-Bajjuri 'ala Sharh Ibn Qasem al-Ghuzziy* (1/224).

The Companions congratulated Ka'ab when Allah revealed the words, **'Verily, We have granted thee a manifest victory.'**¹⁴³

It is recommended for the recipient of such greetings to return the cordiality in equal or even better terms due to the words of Allah the Almighty Who says, **"When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. Allah takes careful account of all things"** [*An-Nisaa`*, 86].

Means of establishing the beginning of the month of Ramadan

The beginning of Ramadan is determined by sighting the crescent when the sun sets on 29th Sha'ban. If the new moon is sighted, the month of Ramadan is established and considered to have begun. If not, the month of Sha'ban must be completed 30 days due to the words of the Prophet ﷺ who said, "Fast when you sight the new moon and break your fast when you sight it. If it is obscured from you, complete thirty days of Sha'ban."⁴⁴ The beginning of Shawwal is established in the same manner.

The criterion for determining the month of Ramadan is physical eye sighting in conjunction with astronomical calculations for the sake of certainty. Astronomical calculations serve to negate and not verify the presence of the new moon. Therefore, if astronomical calculations negate the possibility of the presence of the new moon, physical sightings are not relied upon. Physical eye sighting is the method for establishing the presence of the new moon when astrological calculations do not negate it.

Based on this, if astronomical calculations determine the impossibility of a physical sighting, the testimony of any witness is unacceptable because the definitive science of astronomy has proved otherwise. This method of determining the presence of the new moon implements both

⁴³ *Al-Adab Al-Shar'iyya wal Minah Al-Mar'iyya* (3/229). The hadith is recorded by Bukhari (4/1530) and Muslim (3/1413).

⁴⁴ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/674) and Muslim (2/762).

physical sightings which is a religious imperative and definite astronomical calculation as expressed in the resolutions passed by Islamic Fiqh Assemblies.

Fasting and related rulings

Definition of fasting

The lexical meaning of fasting is abstinence. In Islamic law, it means abstaining from certain things from the break of dawn until sunset.

Wisdom of prescribing fasting

- Fasting is a means to piety. It is easy for a person to abstain from what is prohibited if he abstains from certain lawful necessities such as food and drink for the sake of pleasing Allah and fearing His wrath and punishment. Through fasting, a person attains piety and it is for this reason that Allah the Almighty says, **“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint”** [*Al-Baqarah*, 183].

- Fasting leads to sincerity. No one save Allah knows the truth of a person's fast. It is possible for a person to refrain from fasting without anybody's knowledge, yet nothing prevents a person from fasting except Allah's knowledge and nothing encourages him to fast except to attain His pleasure. A person who embraces this notion is endowed with sincerity. In demonstration of this meaning, Allah the Almighty says in a hadith Qudsi, "All [good] deeds performed by son of Adam are for him save fasting; it is exclusively for Me and I will reward it."⁴⁵

- Fasting is a means to gratitude. This is because by abstaining from such things as food and drink and the rest of the lawful physical desires during the fasting hours, the full extent of these blessings becomes manifest. This allows a person to express his gratitude for all the great

⁴⁵ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (6/2723) and Muslim (2/806).

Divine bounties for which Allah does not ask for recompense. As a result, the heart overflows with mercy, compassion, and sympathy for the poor, the destitute, and the needy demonstrated by the words of Allah the Almighty at the end of the verses on fasting, **“And perchance ye may be grateful”** [*Al-Baqarah*, 185].

- Man is a perpetual sinner though he will be unable to tolerate the torture of hellfire. He is therefore commanded to fast to feel the pangs of hunger in this world that will extinguish his sins and save him from hellfire in the hereafter.⁴⁶

- Fasting is a means to ward off satanic insinuations by cultivating the patience to endure hunger and thirst and refrain from physical desires. It also curbs man's blind pursuit of pleasures. An uninhibited spirit that freely pursues pleasures is easy prey for Satan. It needs to exercise restraint and follow regulations to enjoy the blessings of Allah and it needs to be harnessed to resist satanic temptations. This meaning is demonstrated in the words of the Prophet ﷺ who said, "O youths, whoever has the means should marry for it helps you to lower your gaze and preserve your chastity. But those of you who do not have the means, should fast for it is a means to suppress sexual desire" [Bukhari and Muslim]. Fasting then refers to abstaining from base habits or from indulging in desires and restraining the self from what it is accustomed to do. Because man feels superior to other creatures and is inclined towards the things that hinder him from reaching Divine light, Allah prescribed fasting to remove these obstacles. Even those with spiritual insight do not reach this station except by fasting; fasting generates humility that distances Satan. In this manner, man is rewarded with Divine light and it is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Were it not for the devils who hover over man, he would have been able to discern the Heavenly Kingdom."⁴⁷

- The wisdom behind the obligation to fast for an entire month: Along with the six days of the month of Shawwal, the number of fast days add

⁴⁶ Mohammed Amin Al-Kurdi. *Murshid Al-'Awam fi Akam Al-Siyam*, p.21.

⁴⁷ Recorded by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (2/353) and Ibn Abu Shayba in his *Musannaf* (7/335). See *Murshid Al-'Awam fi Ahkam Al-Siyam*, p. 21.

up to the number of days in a year. This is because a person is rewarded tenfold for a single good deed. Therefore, the month of Ramadan is equal to 10 months and the six days of Shawwal are equal to two months, making the total equivalent to 12 months. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever fasts Ramadan and follows it with six days from the month of Shawwal, it is as if he has fasted the entire year" [recorded by imams Ahmad and Muslim].

The six days fasted after Ramadan are specific to Shawwal due to the month's proximity to the month of Ramadan; these days therefore serve to compensate for any deficiencies committed during the month of Ramadan.⁴⁸

The merits of fasting

There are numerous Prophetic reports on the merits of fasting and its reward.

- On the delight derived from fasting, both in this world and in the Hereafter, the Prophet ﷺ said, "The faster rejoices twice, one at the time of breaking his fast and the other when he meets his Lord."⁴⁹
- It was reported that each day of fasting removes a person from hellfire by a distance of 70 years. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever fasts a day for the sake of Allah, Allah will remove him from hellfire for a distance covered in 70 years."⁵⁰
- On the Day of Judgment, the status of a faster is elevated and he will be allowed to enter paradise from the gate called Ar-Rayan, reserved exclusively for those who fast. The Prophet ﷺ said, "There is a gate in paradise called Ar-Rayan through which only fasters will enter on the Day of Judgment. It will be said, 'Where are the fasters?' They will then

⁴⁸ *Murshid Al-'Awam fi Ahkam Al-Siyam*, p. 22.

⁴⁹ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/673) and Muslim (2/806).

⁵⁰ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (3/1044) and Muslim (2/808).

enter through this gate. When the last of them enters, the gate will close and no one else will pass through it."⁵¹

- Fasting pleases Allah the Almighty. The smell of a faster's mouth, considered unpleasant, is sweet to Allah. The Prophet ﷺ said, "By He in Whose Hands is my soul, the smell of a faster's mouth is sweeter to Allah the Almighty than the smell of musk."⁵²

- Fasting entails a greater reward and excellence than any other act of worship. The Prophet ﷺ said, "All of man's good deeds are rewarded tenfold or up to seven hundred times. Allah the Almighty says, 'Except for fasting. It is for Me and I alone will reward the faster who abandons his desires and food for My sake.'"⁵³ The words, 'Except for fasting, it is for Me' mean that a person's fast is exclusively for the sake of Allah. Since fasting is an act of worship that is not manifest to others, Allah ascribes it to Himself and rewards it without limits because it cannot be performed except by exercising patience. Allah the Almighty says, **"Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure"** [Az-Zumar, 10].

Patience is of three kinds:

- 1- Patience to endure the obedience of Allah.
- 2- Patience to abstain from what Allah has prohibited.
- 3- Patience to endure pain and hardships.

All three are found in fasting. Fasting requires patience to endure obligations, refrain from prohibited desires, and tolerate pangs of hunger, thirst, and physical weakness — all for the sake of attaining the pleasure of Allah the Almighty. Because fasting includes all of these meanings, Allah ascribed it to Himself. He did not commission the angels to reward fasts but undertook this task Himself by rewarding a fasting person beyond measure. The words of Allah, 'I will reward it' mean that Allah's rewards stem from His Divine generosity and not from man's

⁵¹ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/671) and Muslim (2/808).

⁵² Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/670) and Muslim (2/806).

⁵³ Recorded by Bukhari and Muslim.

meritoriousness. Abu al-Hasan said that the words of Allah mean that paradise is the reward for every act of worship but the reward for fasting is meeting Allah Who will look at the faster as he will look at Him; He will speak with the faster as he will speak with Him without the intercession of a prophet or intermediary.¹⁵⁴

The degrees of fasters

The three degrees of fasting

- The fast of the ordinary person: It consists of abstaining from food, drink, and sexual gratification.
- The fast of the select few: It consists of abstaining from food, drink, sexual gratification, as well as keeping the ears, eyes, tongue, hands, feet, and private parts free from sin. Sins committed during a fast diminish rewards and impede the many bounties present in this blessed month. A valid fast is devoid of sins and protects from hellfire. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Fasting is a shield provided it is not violated."⁵⁵ Ibn al-'Arabi said, "Fasting shields from hellfire; it involves abstaining from desires because hellfire is fraught with desires." Ibn Hajar commented on this saying, "Abstaining from desires in this world, shields a faster from hell-fire in the Hereafter."⁵⁶

The select few from among the believers are those who seek to preserve the validity of their fast by refraining from committing sins and striving to keep their body organs free from sin. A person from among this group strives to:

- Restrain his ears from listening to what Allah has prohibited such as eavesdropping, gossiping, tale bearing etc. unless he listens to them unintentionally or unwillingly. In such a case, he is to express his disapproval if possible.

⁵⁴See *Murshid Al-'Awam Ahkam Al-Siyam*, p.17.

⁵⁵Recorded by Ibn Khuzayma in his *Sahih* (3/194).

⁵⁶See *Fat-h Al-Bari Sharh Sahih Bukhari* (4/104).

- Restrain his eyes from looking at what is prohibited and at what occupies the heart and distracts it from remembrance of Allah. The eyes were created to guide man through the darkness, assisting him in his needs and in his contemplation and reflection on the wonders of the heavens and earth. The Prophet ﷺ told 'Ali, "O 'Ali! Do not follow a glance with a second for you will be forgiven the first but not the second."⁵⁷ It was reported that Prophet 'Isa (peace be upon him) said, "Beware of looking [at what is prohibited] for this plants the seeds of desire in the heart."⁵⁸ Al-Junaid (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about what helps a person lower his gaze and he replied, "By knowing that Allah's gaze upon you precedes your gaze upon that which you gaze upon."⁵⁹
- Restrain his tongue by guarding it from trivial or idle talk, lying, backbiting, gossip, offensive speech, ridiculing others, perjury, and from breaking promises.
- Restrain his hands by abstaining from what is forbidden such as unlawful gains, obscenity, or encroaching upon the rights of others such as manipulating weights and measures, theft, bribery, gambling, writing what is prohibited to speak, and hitting, or harming others.
- Restrain his feet by refraining from seeking what a person has not been commanded or recommended to do. This includes informing against a fellow Muslim, going to unlawful places, and passing before a person who is praying without a barrier either deliberately or unnecessarily.
- Protect his private parts by abstaining from what is prohibited during the fasting hours such as engaging in sexual intercourse or from what is prohibited upon either a fasting person or another at other times such as fornication, homosexuality, bestiality, masturbation, and intercourse during menstruation.

⁵⁷ Recorded by Abu Dawud (1/652) who declared the hadith fair and strange.

⁵⁸ Recorded by Al-Baihaqi in *Al-Zuhd Al-Kabeer*, p.167 and by Ibn al-Arabi in *Al-Zuhd wa Sifat Al-Zahideen*, p. 72.

⁵⁹ See *Jami'e Al-Ulum wa Al-Hikam* by Ibn Ragab, p. 162.

The Prophet ﷺ instructed us to control our tongues by refraining from offensive talk and to restrain the rest of our organs from offensive deeds in his comprehensive words, "Fasting is a shield. If one of you is fasting, he should avoid *rafath* and should not behave impudently or foolishly. And if someone fights with a fasting person or insults him, he is to say, 'I am fasting, I am fasting.'"⁶⁰ The word *rafath* here means obscene talk; it also refers to engaging in sexual intercourse and its preliminaries.⁶¹

It is imperative to restrain the organs from committing sins both during a fast and at other times. However, we mention this in relation to fasting because the prohibition is greater at this time than at any other. Al-Qurtubi said, "It must not be understood that [these prohibitions] are permissible at times other than fasting; but it is more incumbent to avoid such things when fasting."⁶² A fasting person must therefore control his organs against all that entails a prohibition.

A person who follows his whims and desires and insists on disobeying his Lord, must know that he will not earn the reward of fasting Ramadan and that thirst and hunger will be his only rewards. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Many are those whose fast does not profit them with anything save hunger and thirst and many are those whose night vigil does not bring them anything save wakefulness during the night,"⁶³ and "He who does not abstain from lying and from practicing falsehood, Allah is in no need of his giving up his food and drink."⁶⁴

- The fast of the elite: It consists of all of the above as well as abstention of the heart from worldly concerns, lustful thoughts, and a total disregard for everything save Allah.⁶⁵ The heart of such a person is occupied with nothing else but Allah and with fulfilling His purpose of administering the earth.

⁶⁰ Recorded by Muslim (2/806), Abu Dawud in his *Sunan* (1/720), and Ibn Maja in his *Sunan* (1/539). The wording is Abu Dawud's.

⁶¹ See *Fat-h Al-Bari Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari* (4/104).

⁶² *Fat-h Al-Bari Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari*.

⁶³ Recorded by Al-Nisa'i in his *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (2/239) and Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* (1/539).

⁶⁴ Recorded by *Al-Bukhari* (2/673).

⁶⁵ See *Murshid Al-'Awam fi Ahkam Al-Siyam*, p.22-4.

The conditions of the obligation of fasting

Fasting Ramadan is obligatory upon every person who:

1- Is a Muslim.

2- Has reached puberty.

3- Is sane.

4- Is capable of bearing the fast. The conditions for this are:

- Good health: Fasting is not obligatory upon a person for whom it entails intolerable hardship.

- Travel: A traveler is not obliged to fast.

- The existence of a preventive: A female in her menses or postnatal bleeding is not obliged to fast.

A person who needs to refrain from fasting due to an excuse is not obliged to fast though he must make up his unperformed fast-days after the excuse ends. But someone who cannot make up his unperformed fast-days, such as a chronically ill person who is not capable of bearing the fast is obliged to make *fidya* (compensation).

Scholars are unanimous on the obligation of fasting; it is a categorical requirement and one of the pillars of Islam. Someone who denies its obligation is considered a disbeliever unless he is ignorant of its ruling, lives in the desert far from scholars, or is a new convert to Islam. Allah the Almighty says, **“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint. (Fasting) for a fixed number of days”** [*Al-Baqarah*, 183-4].

The conditions of a valid fast

The fast of a person who fulfills the following conditions is valid:

1- Islam: The fast of disbeliever is invalid.

2- Sanity: The fast of an insane person is invalid.

3- Purity from menstruation or post-natal bleeding.

4- Time of fasting i.e. a fast-day must not coincide with a day on which it is prohibited to fast such as *yawm ul-fitr* (the feast of breaking the fast), *yawm ul-adha* (the feast of sacrifice), and the three days of *tashriq* (the three days following the feast of sacrifice).

Al-Bajuri, the Sheikh of Islam and Shafi'i scholar, said in *Hashiyatihu al-Fiqhiyya*, "Some of the conditions are common to both the obligation and validity [of fasting] while others are unique to its obligation. Islam and sanity are common to both. However, Islam as a condition for the validity of fasting means that a person must be a Muslim at the time of his fast since the fast of an apostate is invalid. On the other hand, Islam as a condition for the obligation of fasting means that a person must be a Muslim or have been one in the past. Evidence for this is lies in the fact that it is obligatory upon an apostate to make up for the days he has missed after he returns to Islam. Puberty is a condition for the obligation of fasting but not for its validity, evidenced by the fact that the fast of a discerning prepubescent is valid. Likewise, the ability to fast is a condition for the obligation but not for its validity since the fast of a person for whom fasting entails hardship is valid."⁶⁶

The integrals of fasting

The integrals of an obligatory fast include:

1- The intention: According to the opinion of the majority of scholars, it is a condition to make the intention on the eve of the fast prior to dawn. In Hanafi jurisprudence, it is valid to make the intention for a *sawm mu'ayyan* (a fast set to a specific time) until noon and the *suhur* (pre-dawn meal) is considered a partial intention since it has been specifically legislated for fasting. A person must make the intention to fast each day of Ramadan separately, though imam Malik has permitted making a single intention at the beginning of the month.

⁶⁶Hashiyat Al-Sheikh Al-Bajuri 'ala Sharh Ibn Qasem al-Ghuzziy 'ala Abu Shuja' (1/373).

2- Abstaining from things that nullify the fast.

Things that nullify the fast

These include:

- The deliberate introduction of anything into a body cavity through an open orifice such as the mouth and nose (the eyes and skin pores are not considered an open orifice).
- Vaginal or anal intercourse (if deliberate) even if without ejaculation.
- Ejaculation, whether it is the result of touching, kissing, or the like.
- Inducing vomit. Non-deliberate vomiting does not break the fast.
- Menstruation.
- Postnatal bleeding.
- Insanity.
- Apostasy.

Excuses permitting breaking the fast and related rulings

It is permissible for someone for whom fasting is obligatory to refrain from fasting due to any of the following:

1- Inability to fast due to old age or a chronic illness that is incompatible with fasting. Such a person is to make a *fidya* (compensation) for each day he does not fast consisting of a *mudd* (according to the majority of scholars one *mudd* is equivalent to 510 g) of food to a destitute. This ruling is based on the words of Allah the Almighty Who says, **“For those who can do it (with hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent”** [*Al-Baqarah*, 184].

2- Excessive hardship such as that experienced by one who has a temporary illness, is engaged in war or *jihad*, experiences excessive

hunger or thirst that may lead to harm, or is engaged in work that constitutes his source of income and cannot postpone it or perform it while fasting. It is valid for such a person to refrain from fasting though he is obliged to make up the missed fast-days at a later time.

3- Traveling. This involves traveling for a legal purpose provided the distance is at least 83 km, regardless of whether or not it entails hardship. Such a traveler is obliged to make up the days on which he refrains from fasting at a later date due to the words of Allah Almighty Who says, **“But if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number (should be made up) from days later”** [Al-Baqarah, 184].

4- Pregnancy. It is permissible for a pregnant woman who fears for herself to refrain from fasting and she is obliged to make up the missed fast-days at a later date. The reason for this is that her condition is comparable to that of an ill person. But if she fears for her unborn child and not for herself, she is to refrain from fasting and is obliged to make up the missed fast-days in addition to paying a *fidya*. In Hanafi jurisprudence, she is not obliged to pay *fidya* but only to make up her missed fast-days.

5- Nursing. The ruling for a pregnant woman applies to a nursing woman.

6- Saving a life. If saving the life of a person on the verge of death or in partial danger is contingent on refraining from fasting, then it is permissible for the savior to do so to ward off the greater of two evils or harms. This becomes a duty if no one else can be found to perform the rescue and he is to make up the missed fast-day later.

The ruling for refraining from fasting due to a reason other than the above

Refraining from fasting without an excuse is an enormity for which there is no expiation except sincere repentance. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever refrains from fasting a day of Ramadan without an excuse or

cause of illness, cannot require it by fasting a lifetime, even were he to do so."⁶⁷ It is known that Allah has prescribed expiation to erase grave sins that are committed due to overwhelming circumstances. Examples include the expiation for intercourse during the fasting hours of Ramadan or involuntary manslaughter. There is no expiation for major sins committed deliberately; they cannot be erased except by sincere repentance.

Refraining from fasting may require making up the fast, expiation, or both as follows:

1- Refraining from fasting entails making up the fast, expiation, and continuing the fast for the rest of the day. This is only found in Shafi'i and Hanafi jurisprudence and applies when a person deliberately vitiates his fast by sexual intercourse.

2- It entails making up the fast and continuing it for the rest of the day without making expiation due to the invalidators mentioned above except for sexual intercourse. In addition, Hanafi and Maliki scholars maintained the obligation of making expiation for a person who eats and drinks deliberately during the fasting hours.

The three types of expiation

The first consists of manumitting a slave for each day a person has vitiated his fast by sexual intercourse during the fasting hours. Unlike the Hanafis, the majority of scholars maintained that the manumitted slave must be a Muslim. Since this type of expiation does not apply at present due to the international anti-slavery treaties to which Muslims are a party, a person is to make the second type of expiation that consists of fasting two months consecutively. If this is not possible, then he is to feed sixty of the destitute and if he is not able to do this, the expiation is deferred until his situation improves and he is able to do any of the above. According to Maliki scholars, a person who is required to make expiation is to choose from any of the above and this fulfills the obligation.

⁶⁷ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/682).

Disliked matters

These include acts that are disliked; the person who forsakes them is rewarded although doing them does not invalidate the fast. They include:

- 1- Rinsing out the mouth and nose excessively due to the words of the Prophet ﷺ who said, "Rinse out your nose thoroughly except when you are fasting."⁶⁸
- 2- Tasting food unnecessarily lest it reaches an internal body cavity.
- 3- Gathering saliva in the mouth and swallowing it.
- 4- Kissing (for those who are aroused by it) as well as touching and the preliminaries to intercourse.
- 5- Wet cupping due to its debilitating effect.
- 6- Smelling items such as musk, incense, and the like the particles of which can reach the throat.
- 7- Being preoccupied with pastimes because they involve amusements that are incompatible with fasting and its spiritual meanings.
- 8- Using the *siwak* after noon according to Shafi'i scholars and one report from Hanbali scholars, contrary to the opinion of the majority of scholars who do not deem it disliked.

Things that are lawful during the fast

- 1- Lining the eyes with kohl, even if it leaves an aftertaste in the mouth. This is because the eyes are not considered an orifice in Islamic law.
- 2- Eye drops even if they reach the throat.
- 3- Oils and creams even if they reach a body cavity through skin pores.
- 4- Using the *siwak* before noon.

⁶⁸ Recorded by Abu Dawud (1/721).

5- Washing. It was reported that the Prophet ﷺ would pour water over his head while he was fasting due to thirst or intense heat.⁶⁹

6- Injections, whether intravenous or intramuscular, unlike enemas which break the fast. Maliki scholars maintained that enemas are merely disliked and according to them, a person who uses an enema is not required to making up the fast.

7- Sleeping, even if for all the daylight hours, provided a person does not intend by this to neglect the prescribed prayers since this is unlawful.

8- Swallowing anything that one cannot guard against such as saliva and road dust. It is permissible to smell sweet fragrances.

Things that are desirable to do during the fast

- Eating *suhur*. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Eat *suhur* for it is a blessing."⁷⁰

- Delaying *suhur*. Zayd Ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Prophet ﷺ stood up to pray after we had our *suhur* with him. I asked him, 'How long was the interval between the *adhan* (call to prayer) and *suhur*?' He replied, 'The time it takes to recite fifty verses.'
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- Hastening to break the fast. The Prophet ﷺ said, "People will continue to adhere to good as long as they hasten to break their fast."⁷²

- Supplicating to Allah during the fast and before breaking it. The Prophet ﷺ said, "There are three categories of people whose supplications are never rejected," and he mentioned 'the faster until he breaks his fast'.⁷³ Among the supplications that the Prophet ﷺ said

⁶⁹ Recorded by Abu Dawud (1/721) and Ahmad in his *Musnad* (5/380).

⁷⁰ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/678) and Muslim (2/770).

⁷¹ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/678) and Muslim (2/771).

⁷² Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/692) and Muslim (2/771).

⁷³ Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan* (5/578), Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* (1/557), and Ahmad in his *Musnad* (2/304).

before breaking his fast is, "The thirst has been quenched, the veins moistened, and the reward confirmed by the will of Allah."⁷⁴

- Breaking the fast with ripe dates; if ripe dates are not readily available, then with dry dates; if not, then with water. Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) reported, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would break his fast with fresh ripe dates before praying. If not, he would eat dried dates. If not, he would take a few sips of water."⁷⁵

- Abstaining from what is incompatible with fasting and its spiritualities. Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "He who does not abstain from lying and false accusations, Allah has no need for his abstinence from food and drink."⁷⁶

Related fatwas

- What is the ruling for breaking the fast before sunset for one who assumes that the sun has set?

His fast is invalid because no importance is attached to manifestly erroneous assumptions. Based on this, he must fast for the remainder of the fasting hours in addition to making up the fast.

- What is the ruling for eating and drinking on the presumption that dawn has not come?

The fast is invalid. Based on this, a person must make up the fast and continue fasting for the rest of the day due to the sanctity of the month.

- What is the ruling for rinsing the mouth and nose when fasting?

It is permissible for a faster to rinse his mouth and nose, although it is disliked to do so excessively.

- What is the ruling for cooling one's body with water when fasting?

⁷⁴ Recorded by Abu Dawud in his *Sunan* (1/719).

⁷⁵ Recorded by Abu Dawud in his *Sunan* (1/719) and Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan* ((3/79).

⁷⁶ Recorded by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (2/673).

It is legally permissible to wash or pour water on the body to alleviate heat or thirst and this does not vitiate the fast. 'A`isha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that sometimes in Ramadan, dawn would break while the Prophet ﷺ was in a state of major ritual impurity that was not due to wet dreams and he would bathe and fast.⁷⁷ Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I have an *azban* in which I lie while I am fasting."⁷⁸ The *abzan* is a basin used for bathing.

A person who is fasting must be careful not to let water enter a body cavity through his mouth or nose; it is of no consequence if water particles enter his body through the pores because the fast invalidators are those things that enter the body through a visible orifice.

- What is the ruling for swallowing phlegm?

Phlegm does not break the fast except if it coughed up and then swallowed.

- Does vomiting invalidate fasting?

The fast of a person who is overcome by involuntary vomiting is valid and he is not obliged to make it up. However, he must be careful not to intentionally swallow anything of his gorge though there is no harm if he does so. Whoever deliberately and voluntarily vomits while remembering that he is fasting, vitiates his fast even if nothing of it reaches a body cavity. He is to fast a day in lieu of the day on which he has broken his fast due to the words of the Prophet ﷺ who said, "Whoever is fasting and is overcome by vomiting, is not required to make up the fast but whoever throws up deliberately must make it up."⁷⁹

- What is the ruling for using nose and eardrops when fasting?

According to scholars (although there are different opinions), the body cavity comprises the stomach, intestines, bladder, and the lower part of

⁷⁷ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/681) and Muslim (2/779).

⁷⁸ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/681).

⁷⁹ Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi (3/98), Ibn Majah (1/536), and Ahmed in his *Musnad* (2/498).

the head. The fast is vitiated when any substance is introduced through a visible body orifice.

For this reason, scholars have maintained that nose drops vitiate fasting if the droplets reach inside the head cavity. A person is not required to make up the fast if the droplets do not go beyond the nasopharynx.

Conversely, some Shafi'i scholars have maintained that eardrops do not vitiate fasting, and based their argument on the non-existence of a visible aperture leading from the ear to the head. They maintained that the droplets reach the head through pores in the same manner as kohl that is applied to the eyes. There is no objection to following this opinion to ward off harm, though the former opinion is more religiously precautionous.

- Do intravenous and intramuscular injections taken for medical or nutritional reasons invalidate fasting?

Fasting is not invalidated by intravenous and intramuscular injections taken for medicinal or nutritional purposes but by anything that enters the body cavity through a visible external natural body orifice. The injected substance does not even reach a body cavity nor does it enter the body through a visible external natural body orifice but through the pores and therefore does not nullify fasting.

- What is the ruling for using enemas when fasting?

According to the opinion of the majority of scholars, enemas invalidate fasting if administered deliberately and by choice because they carry the injected substance to a body cavity through a body orifice. In one of their opinions, the Malikis maintained that enemas are permissible and do not break the fast. This is likewise the opinion of the students of imam al-Shafi'i. In another opinion, the Malikis stated that it is disliked to use enemas during fasting and it is recommended for a person who uses an enema to make up the fast.

Based on the above, whoever has to use an enema or the like while fasting and cannot delay its administration till after breaking his fast, may follow the Maliki opinion maintaining its permissibility; his fast will

be valid and he is not required to make it up. However, it is preferable to make up the fast to remove himself from the majority opinion maintaining its impermissibility.

- What is the ruling for using asthma inhalers when fasting?

The use of asthma inhalers vitiates fasting because they carry liquid medicine in the form of droplets that reach an internal cavity through the mouth (which is a natural body orifice). It is therefore obligatory to make up the fast. If this is not possible and the faster's condition is chronic, he is to make *fidya* by feeding a destitute for each day he refrains from fasting. The *fidya* consists of one *mudd* (510 g) of the staple food of the country. It is permissible to give out the cash equivalent of the *fidya*.

- What is the ruling for wet cupping and blood transfusions when fasting?

The majority of scholars have maintained that cupping does not vitiate fasting because only those substances that enter the body and not those that exit invalidate the fast. Blood transfusions have the same ruling; they do not affect the validity of the fast provided they do not harm the faster or have a debilitating effect.

- What is the ruling for a woman who takes medicine to delay menstruation for the entire month of Ramadan?

This is permissible unless it is medically proven that it is of harm. It is better for a woman to submit to the decree of Allah the Almighty concerning menstruation. She is required to make up the missed fast-days later and she will thus earn a greater reward.

- What is the ruling for vaginal examinations when fasting?

According to the majority of scholars, vaginal examinations during which an examining device is inserted inside the vagina nullifies a woman's fast. Maliki scholars, however, have maintained that inserting any solid object in a woman's private parts does not vitiate her fast.

Based on this, a woman who needs to have a vaginal examination while fasting may follow the opinion of the Malikis and her fast will be valid. However, it is preferable for her to make up the fast to remove herself from the scholarly difference of opinion over this matter.

- What is the ruling for smoking when fasting?

Smoking, in addition to being an offensive habit and a prohibited act that is hazardous to health, vitiates the fast. A person who smokes while fasting must make up the fast since smoke reaches the chest through the nasal cavity and therefore has definitely reached a body cavity.

On the merits associated with Ramadan

Rulings related to some desirable acts while fasting

- *I'tikaf* (spiritual retreat)

The lexical meaning of *i'tikaf* is to adhere, persevere, and devote time to a certain activity, whether good or evil. Allah the Almighty says, "**Do not associate with your wives while you are in retreat in the mosques**" [*Al-Baqarah*, 187] and "**Behold! He said to his father and his people, "What are these images, to which ye are (so assiduously) devoted?"**" [*Al-Anbiya`*, 52].

In the context of Islamic law, the term means intending to confine oneself in a mosque. Allah the Almighty says, "**Do not associate with your wives while you are in retreat in the mosques.**" Confining oneself in a place designated for worship and refraining from permissible conjugal relations for this purpose, is itself proof that *i'tikaf* is an act of worship.⁸⁰

Prophetic reports indicate that the Prophet ﷺ continued to perform *i'tikaf* during the last ten days of every Ramadan until his death and that his wives performed this practice after his death.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Al-Sarkhasy. *Al-Mabsut* (3/114).

⁸¹ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/713) and Muslim (2/830).

The Islamic community is unanimous on the *sunnah* nature of *i'tikaf*⁸² which is among the elements of previous canonical legislations. *I'tikaf* is desirable, whether it is performed in Ramadan or at any other time. The *i'tikaf* performed in the last ten days of Ramadan is better than that performed at any other time since *Laylut ul-Qadr*, the best day of the year during which one seeks abundant rewards by praying, reciting the Qur`an, and making supplications in abundance, coincides with one of these days. Allah the Almighty says, **“The Night of Power is better than a thousand months”** [*Al-Qadr*, 3]. The words of Allah the Almighty mean that acts performed on *Laylut ul-Qadr* garner a greater reward than those performed at other times. Scholars are unanimous that *Laylut ul-Qadr* falls on one of the last ten days of Ramadan.⁸³

A vow to perform *i'tikaf* such as by saying 'I will perform *i'tikaf* for the sake of Allah' or 'I vow to perform *i'tikaf* for the sake of Allah' or other similar statements, obligate their fulfillment.

According to the opinion of latter scholars from the Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali schools of jurisprudence, the minimum period for *i'tikaf* is dictated by custom. The lexical meaning of *i'tikaf* refers to both brief and long periods of retreat; Islamic law does not restrict it to a particular length of time and its duration is therefore unspecified.⁸⁴ However, scholars recommended that one is to spend not less than a full day in *i'tikaf* to remove oneself from the scholarly controversy of those who maintain that it must last for a full day or more.⁸⁵ They likewise stated that it is desirable for a person who enters the mosque to make the intention to perform *i'tikaf*, even if he intends to stay for a short period.⁸⁶

There is no limit to the maximum period of *i'tikaf*. Al-Nawawi said, "The longer [the period of *i'tikaf*], the better; there is no limit to the

⁸² Imam Al-Nawawi. *Al-Majmu'* (6/501).

⁸³ Al-Khatib Al-Shirbiny. *Al-Mughni Al-Muhtaj* (2/189).

⁸⁴ *Al-Majmu'* (6/515).

⁸⁵ *Al-Majmu'* (6/513).

⁸⁶ Al-Shams ar-Ramli. *Nihayat Al-Muhtaj* (3/219).

maximum period. It is valid to perform *i'tikaf* for an entire lifetime as it is likewise valid to vow to perform *i'tikaf* for one's lifetime."⁸⁷

The person embarking on this act of worship determines the beginning and end of his *i'tikaf* period. If he intends to perform *i'tikaf* for a determined period, it is recommended for him to complete it in full though it is permissible if he does not because it is not obligatory to execute a voluntary act. But if a person makes the intention to perform *i'tikaf* without specifying its period, it lasts for as long as he remains in the mosque.⁸⁸

It is desirable for a person who wishes to perform *i'tikaf* for the last ten days of Ramadan to enter the mosque before the sun sets on 20th Ramadan. It is likewise recommended for him to spend the eve of the *'Eid* in the mosque and then head straight to the *'Eid* prayer from the mosque in which he performed his *i'tikaf*. It is permissible for him to exit the mosque before this time.

Al-Nawawi said, "Al-Shafi'i and his disciples maintained that whoever wishes to follow the Prophet's example by performing *i'tikaf* for the last ten days of Ramadan, must enter the mosque before the sun sets on 20th Ramadan lest he miss part of the day. He must exit the mosque after the sun sets on the eve of the day of *'Eid* regardless of the number of the days of the month. It is optimal if he spends the eve of the day of *'Eid* in the mosque to offer the *'Eid* prayer there or exit the mosque directly for the *musalla* if the *'Eid* prayer is offered there."⁸⁹

I'tikaf is performed in the mosque. Scholars from the four schools of jurisprudence have unanimously agreed that for men, *i'tikaf* is only valid when it is performed in the mosque due to the words of Allah Who says, **"Do not associate with your wives while you are in retreat in the mosques"** [*Al-Baqarah*, 187].

There is a scholarly debate concerning which mosques are acceptable for the validity of *i'tikaf*. Maliki and Shafi'i scholars have maintained the

⁸⁷ *Al-Majmu'* (6/514).

⁸⁸ *Al-Majmu'* (6/514).

⁸⁹ *Al-Majmu'* (6/516).

permissibility of performing *i'tikaf* in any mosque because of the words of Allah the Almighty Who says, **“Do not associate with your wives while you are in retreat in the mosques”** [*Al-Baqarah*, 187]. The command in this verse is general and there is no evidence to restrict *i'tikaf* to certain mosques apart from others.⁹⁰

According to imams Abu Hanifah and Ahmad, *i'tikaf* must be performed in congregational mosques where the five prescribed prayers and group prayer are performed. Although not a condition, it is preferable to perform *i'tikaf* in a congregational mosque to remove oneself from the scholarly controversy of those who obligate it. The reason for this is that the number of those who attend prayers there is greater and because it does not necessitate exiting the mosque for Friday prayer.⁹¹

It is not permissible to exit the mosque during the *i'tikaf* period except for a necessity because exiting without an excuse is tantamount to an excursion. It is unlawful to exit the mosque for an unnecessary reason or need and doing so severs the *i'tikaf* i.e. it is invalidated.

A person in *i'tikaf* may exit the mosque for a regular action such to use the lavatory, or to throw up, purify filth, perform ablution and the like of other obligatory acts of purification. This is not forbidden and does not interrupt *i'tikaf* because they are all necessary actions and most of them cannot be performed inside the mosque. If *i'tikaf* were to be invalidated by exiting the mosque for any of the above reasons, then it would not be possible for anyone to perform it. During the Prophet's spiritual retreats, he would exit the mosque to relieve himself. 'A`isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "When the Prophet ﷺ performed *i'tikaf*, he would draw his head near to me and I would comb [his hair] and he would only go inside the house to relieve himself."⁹²

Ibn Mundhir said, "[Scholars] are unanimous on the permissibility of exiting the place of *i'tikaf* to use the lavatory."⁹³

⁹⁰ See *Al-Muwatta`* (1/313).

⁹¹ *Mughni Al-Muhtaj* (2/190).

⁹² Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/714) and Muslim (1/244).

⁹³ See Ibn Al-Mundhir. *Al-Ijma'*, p. 60.

- Completing the Qur`an

Our righteous predecessors had different habits concerning the amount of time they spent to complete the Qur`an. Some of them would complete the Qur`an once in a single day and night, or once, twice, thrice every month.

Some of the early Muslims found it offensive to complete the Qur`an once in a single day and night because a hasty recitation prevents a reciter from making *tarteel* i.e. reciting in slow, measured rhythmic tones. When the Prophet ﷺ instructed 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) to recite the Qur`an once every month, 'Abdullah replied, "I can do more than that." 'Amr persisted until the Prophet ﷺ told him to recite the Qur`an once every three days.⁹⁴ In another version of the hadith the Prophet ﷺ told Abdullah to recite the Qur`an once every seven days.⁹⁵ However, scholars have maintained that the ruling on the offensiveness of completing the Qur`an in a single day is not inclusive of everyone. Al-Walid al-Baji said, "The Prophet's instructions to 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr to complete the Qur`an once every three or seven days may either mean that this is the optimal time span for a single Qur`anic recitation or that it is the most suitable for Ibn 'Amr. But whoever is able to complete the Qur`an in less time than this must not be prevented from doing so. When asked about the person who completes the Qur`an once every night, Malik replied, 'How excellent is this! The Qur`an is the best of all that is good.'⁹⁶

Commenting on how often the Qur`an should be recited, al-Nawawi said, "It differs from one person to another. Whoever can discover the subtleties of the Qur`an by contemplation is to limit himself to the time it takes him to fully understand what he reads. Similarly, anyone occupied with such pursuits as spreading knowledge or with other religious tasks and the general interest of Muslims is to limit himself to the amount of time that does not cause him to neglect his work. If he is

⁹⁴ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/698).

⁹⁵ Recorded by Abdul Razeq in his *Musannaf* (3/355).

⁹⁶ See *Al-Burhan fi 'Ulum Al-Qur`an* (1/471).

not among the above, he is to read the Qur`an as much as possible without reaching the point of boredom or reading unintelligibly."⁹⁷

Some scholars recommend completing the Qur`an during the first portion of the night or day.⁹⁸ Imam al-Ghazali said, "It is preferable to complete one recitation at night and one by day and to make the latter during the two *rak'as* of the dawn prayer of Monday or after it and to make the former during the sunset prayer on the eve of Friday or after it. [The goal] is to start the day and night hours with a complete Qur`anic recitation because, if a person completes his recitation at night, the angels (peace be upon them) continue to invoke blessings upon him until he awakens, and if he completes it at the beginning of the day, they continue to invoke blessings upon him until evening. Their blessings will thus encompass the whole day and night."⁹⁹ Some scholars recommend that whoever recites the Qur`an alone to complete it during his prayers.¹⁰⁰

It is a *sunnah* to make supplications after completing the Qur`an due to the words of the Prophet ﷺ who said, "Whoever completes the Qur`an will have one prayer answered."¹⁰¹ Al-Nawawi reported that the pious predecessors said, "Supplications made at the end of a complete Qur`anic recitation are answered and the mercy of Allah descends. They firmly recommended making supplications after completing the Qur`an and there are many non-Prophetic reports that attest to this. It is recommended to be persistent when making supplications and to ask for provisions and for the general welfare of Muslims and their leaders. It is recommended to choose all-inclusive supplications."¹⁰²

It is recommended to attend gatherings for the purpose of completing the Qur`an. It was recorded in the *Sahih* of Bukhari and the *Sahih* of Muslim that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that all females, even those who are unmarried and menstruating, must attend supplication

⁹⁷ See *Al-Tibyan fi Adab Hamilat Al-Qur`an*, p. 61.

⁹⁸ See *Al-Majmu' Sharh AL-Muhadhab* (2/194)

⁹⁹ See *Ihya` 'Ulum Al-Deen* (1/276).

¹⁰⁰ See *Al-Majmu' Sharh Muhadhab* (2/194).

¹⁰¹ Recorded by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer* (18/259).

¹⁰² Recorded by *Al-Majmu' Sharh Al-Muhadhab* (2/194).

gatherings.¹⁰³ If all women, even those in a state of menstruation who are commanded to refrain from performing certain obligatory acts of worship, are commanded to attend gatherings for supplications to take part and affirm them in the hope of attaining blessings at this great event, then a fortiori others.

Ibn Abu Dawud reported through Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) that he would frequently ask a person to supervise another's recitation. He would then ask him to call him when the reciter was about to conclude his recitation to attend the completion of the Qur`an. It was reported through Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that whenever he completed the Qur`an, he would call the members of his household and supplicate Allah for them.¹⁰⁴ Ibn Abu Dawud reported through authentic chains of transmission through Al-Hakam Ibn 'Ayinnah, the great tabi'i who said, "Mujahid and 'Utba Ibn Lababah sent for me and said, 'We have sent for you because we wish to complete the Qur`an and supplications are answered at this time.'" Some authentic reports state, "It is said that the mercy of Allah descends after completing the Qur`an." It was likewise reported with authentic chains of transmission through Mujahid that he said, "They would gather to complete the Qur`an and say, 'The mercy of Allah descends [at this time]'".¹⁰⁵

It is recommended to recommence reading the Qur`an immediately after completing a recitation. This is because of the report of Ibn 'Abbas who narrated that a man once told the Prophet ﷺ, "O Messenger of Allah! Which act of worship is dearer to Allah?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "*Al-Hal al-murtahil*." The man asked, "What is *al-hal al-murtahil*?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "It is to recite the Qur`an from beginning to end and, as soon as one finishes the recitation, to start over again."¹⁰⁶

- *Qiyam ul-Layl* during Ramadan and the *tarawih* prayer

¹⁰³ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/595) and Muslim (2/605).

¹⁰⁴ Recorded by AL-Darimiy in his *Sunan* (4/1830).

¹⁰⁵ See *Al-Tibyan fi Adab Hamilat Al-Qur`an*, p. 159.

¹⁰⁶ Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan* (5/197).

It is a confirmed recommendation in Islam to spend the night in worship. The Prophet ﷺ observed *qiyam ul-layl* in gratitude to Allah; 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ would spend the night in prayer until [the skin on] his feet cracked. She asked him, "O Messenger of Allah! Why do you do this when Allah has forgiven all your sins?" He replied, "Should I not be a grateful slave of Allah?!" When the Prophet ﷺ gained some weight, he would pray while seated and when he wished to make *ruku'*, he would stand up and recite the Qur`an and then make *ruku'*.¹⁰⁷

Allah the Almighty praises the believers who spend the night in worship as He praises none others. He encouraged Muslims to observe *qiyam ul-layl* and His words demonstrate the great honor bestowed upon those who practice it. Allah Almighty says, **"They forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in fear and hope: And they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which We have bestowed on them. Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them—as a reward for their (good) deeds"** [*As-Sajda*, 16-7].

Allah distinguished the last hours of the night with a multitude of Divine bounties and the blessings of Divine propinquity that revive hearts and souls. Moreover, He promised to grant His favor and great rewards to those who spend the night in worship, whether praying, making *du'a`*, asking for His forgiveness, invoking blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ, glorifying Him or performing any other form of worship or *dhikr*. Allah describes His righteous servants as, **"Those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrate and standing"** [*Al-Furqan*, 64] and **"Those are the ones who will be rewarded with the highest place in heaven, because of their patient constancy: therein shall they be met with salutations and peace, dwelling therein; --how beautiful an abode and place of rest!"** [*Al-Furqan*, 75-6]. He also says, **"For the righteous are gardens in the nearness to their Lord, with rivers flowing beneath; therein is their eternal home; with spouses purified and the good pleasure of Allah. For in Allah's sight are (all) His servants, -- (Namely),**

¹⁰⁷ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (1/385).

those who say: "Our Lord! We have indeed believed: forgive us, then, our sins, and save us from the agony of the Fire;" --Those who show patience (firmness and self-control;) who are true (in word and deed); who worship devoutly; who spend (in the way of Allah); and who pray for forgiveness in the early hours of the morning" [Al-'Imran, 15-7].

Describing the prayers of our master the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her), said, "He would sleep during the early portion of the night and stand up in prayer during the latter portion."¹⁰⁸

To exhort Muslims to make *du'a`* and commune with Allah during the night hours, the Prophet ﷺ said, "There is an hour at night during which *du'a`* is accepted if it coincides with the prayers of a Muslim asking for the good of this world or the hereafter; this occurs every night."¹⁰⁹ It is of greater precedence to profit from the night hours during the month of Ramadan.

Muslims are unanimous on the *sunnah* of *qiyam ul-layl* because of the words of the Prophet ﷺ who said, "Whoever spends the nights of Ramadan in prayer out of faith and hoping to attain its reward will have his past and future sins forgiven."¹¹⁰ A Muslim will attain this bounty especially during the last ten nights of Ramadan when he seeks out *Laylut ul-Qadr*. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Seek out *Laylut ul-Qadr* during the last ten nights of Ramadan."¹¹¹ The Prophet ﷺ would spend the night in worship, wake up his wives and gird his waist cloth."¹¹²

On more than one occasion, the Companions prayed behind the Prophet ﷺ in the mosque during the night in Ramadan. Afterwards, the Prophet ﷺ would refrain from praying *qiyam ul-layl* in congregation out of sympathy for his community lest it become obligatory upon them. 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "One night, the Messenger

¹⁰⁸ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (1/358) and Muslim (1/510).

¹⁰⁹ Recorded by Muslim (1/521).

¹¹⁰ Recorded by Bukhari (1/22) and Muslim (1/523).

¹¹¹ Recorded by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (3/71) and Al-Tabarani in his *Al-Mu'jam AL-Kabeer* (2/227).

¹¹² Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/711) and Muslim (2/832).

of Allah ﷺ prayed in the mosque and people prayed behind him. The following night, he prayed in the mosque and people gathered in greater numbers to pray behind him. On the third or fourth night when the people gathered to pray behind him, the Prophet ﷺ did not come out for prayer. When morning came, he told the people, 'I witnessed what you did. Nothing prevented me from coming out to you except that I feared that [this prayer] might be made obligatory upon you (in Ramadan).'¹¹³

Our master, 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib encouraged 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) to establish the *sunnah* of *qiyam ul-layl*. During his caliphate, 'Umar ordered the people to gather for the prayer in Ramadan. 'Abdul-Rahman Ibn 'Abdul-Qariy said, "One night in Ramadan, I accompanied 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) to the mosque and found the people there either praying alone or in small groups. 'Umar said, 'In my opinion, it would be better if the people pray behind one reciter.' So, he decided to congregate them behind Ubai Ibn Ka'b (may Allah be pleased with him). I accompanied him again on another night and the people were praying behind one reciter. At this, 'Umar said, 'What an excellent innovation this is! Although the prayer they do not perform and sleep at its time, is better than the one they are performing," i.e. the prayer performed during the last part of the night. In those days, people offered the prayer in the early part of the night."¹¹⁴

The hadith scholar, al-Suyuti, said, "'Umar referred to the prayer of *qiyam ul-layl* as an innovation albeit a good one. He only referred to it as such because it was not practiced at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. This was mentioned by imam al-Shafi'i and elucidated by a group of imams including Sheikh 'Izz ad-Deen 'Abdul-Salam who divided innovation into five categories. He said, "An example of a recommended innovation is the *tarawih* prayer." Al-Nawawi wrote in *Tahdhib Al-Asma` wa Al-Lughat*, "Al-Baihaqi reported it with his chain of transmission in *Manaqeb Al-Shafi'i* and said, 'Innovations are of two kinds: the first comprises innovations that contravene the Qur`an, *sunnah*, a non-

¹¹³ Recorded by Bukhari (1/524).

¹¹⁴ Recorded by Bukhari (1/524).

prophetic tradition, or consensus; this kind of innovation is a misguidance. The second comprises what is good; this kind of innovation is not reprehensible. Concerning the *qiyam ul-layl* prayer in Ramadan 'Umar said, 'What an excellent innovation this is!' i.e. it is a newly introduced matter. This was al-Shafi'i's final opinion on this matter."¹¹⁵

According to the opinion of the Companions who were present during the caliphate of 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the practice of Muslims both in the past and present, and the established opinion of the four schools of jurisprudence, the *tarawih* prayer is made up of either 20 *rak'as* excluding the *witr* or 23 *rak'as* including the *witr*. Al-Sa'ib Ibn Yazid (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "During the time of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, people offered a 20 *rak'a* [*tarawih*] prayer in Ramadan." Abu al-Hasna` reported that 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) instructed a man to lead the people in prayer with five rest periods and 20 *rak'as*."¹¹⁶

Abu Bakr al-Kasani, the Hanafi scholar, said, "[The *tarawih* prayer] comprises twenty *rak'as* with ten *salams* and five periods of rest. A period of rest is offered after every two *salams*. This is the general opinion of scholars."¹¹⁷

The Hanafi scholar and luminary, al-Tahtawi, said, "The status of the *tarawih* as a *sunnah* is based on the consensus of the Companions and later generations. Anyone who refutes this is a misguided innovator whose testimony is not accepted."¹¹⁸

The Shafi'i scholar, al-Nawawi, said, "In our school, [the *tarawih* prayer] comprises 20 *rak'as* with 10 *salams* excluding the *witr*. This includes five periods of rest, with one period after each four *rak'as* and two *salams*. Abu Hanifa and his students, imam Ahmad, Dawud and others maintained the same opinion. Al-Qadi 'Ayad transmitted this opinion from the majority of scholars. It was reported that al-Aswad Ibn Yazid would offer forty *rak'as* of *tarawih* and seven *rak'as* of *witr*. Malik said

¹¹⁵ Al-Suyuti. *Al-Masabih fi Salat Al-Tarawih*, (1/335).

¹¹⁶ Recorded by Al-Baihaqi in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (2/497).

¹¹⁷ See *Bada'i' Al-Sana'i'*.

¹¹⁸ Al-Tahtawi. *Hashiyat 'ala Maraqqi Al-Falah Sharh Nur Al-Idah*, p. 270.

that the *tarwih* prayer is made up of nine periods of rest i.e thirty-six *rak'as* excluding the *witr*. He based his opinion on the practice of the people of Medina.¹¹⁹ This opinion of Malik is not the well-known opinion of his school. He maintained another opinion that agrees with the opinion of the majority of scholars and is the established opinion of the Maliki school.¹²⁰

The scholars who maintained that the number of *rak'as* are less than 20 refer to the prayer that fulfills the *sunnah* of *qiyam* in both Ramadan and at other times. But the *qiyam* that is referred to as '*tarawih*' comprises the number of *rak'as* mentioned above.

The Shafi'i scholar, Abu Zar'a al-'Iraqi, said, "The secret to the number of *rak'as* of the *tarawih* prayer lies in the fact that the number of *rak'as* of the *sunnah* prayers associated with the prescribed prayers are ten. This number is doubled in Ramadan because it is a time for exerting oneself in worship."¹²¹

The *tarawih* prayer is a confirmed *sunnah* and it is not obligatory. However, whoever omits it misses a great reward. A person who performs more or less than the established number of *rak'as* is not blameworthy.

It is recommended to complete the Qur`an during the *tarawih* prayer over the month of Ramadan. The luminary ad-Dardiri wrote in *Al-Sharh Al-Saghir*, "It is recommended to complete the Qur`an by reciting on each night one part during the *tarawih* prayer."¹²²

At present, it is customary to offer a number of *rak'as* known as '*salat at-tahajjud*' in the latter part of the night of the last ten days of Ramadan. This is a praiseworthy practice because this is a time of great blessings, it is a time when Muslims seek out *Laylut ul-Qadr*, and supplications made at this time are accepted. Moreover, many hadiths mention the excellence of praying during this time. Allah the Almighty

¹¹⁹ See *Al-Majmu'* (3/527).

¹²⁰ See *Sharh Al-Saghir bi Hashiyat Al-Sawi* (1/404-5).

¹²¹ Waliy Al-Deen Abu Zar'a Al'Iraqi. *Tarh Al-Tathreeb fi Sharh Al-Taqrreeb* (3/89).

¹²² See *Al-Sharh Al-Saghir bi Hashiyat Al-Sawi* (1/404-5).

says, **“And as for the night keep awake a part of it as an additional prayer for thee: soon will thy Lord raise thee to a station of praise and glory!”** [*Al-Isra`*, 79].

- *Laylut ul-Qadr*, the Night of Power and its virtues

Laylut ul-Qadr is one of the nights that occur in the month of Ramadan. On this night:

- The decrees of creation descend to the lowest heaven.
- Supplications are accepted.
- The Qur`an was revealed.¹²³

This night was called *Laylut ul-Qadr* because it is the night on which the destiny of creatures for the coming year is decreed. Allah the Almighty says, **“In that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom”** [*Ad-Dukhan*, 4].

Several interpretations were posited in reference to its name. It was said that it was so called because of its great status with Allah, because on this night the earth is constricted due to the great number of angels who descend from the heavens, and because acts of worship are of great importance.¹²⁴ Al-Husein Ibn al-Fadl was asked, "Did not Allah decree destinies before He created the heavens and the earth?" "Yes," he replied. The inquirer then asked, "Then what does *Laylut ul-Qadr* mean?" Al-Husein replied, "The decrees are [first] dispatched at specific points of time and are then executed." Allah makes the decrees known to the angles: the provisions of the people, who will live, who will die, and everything that has been ordained for that year. He commands the angels to do whatever they have been enjoined to do.

Allah referred to this night as blessed. He says, **“We sent it down on a blessed night: For We (ever) wish to warn (against Evil)”** [*Ad-Dukhan*, 3] and **“We have indeed revealed this (message) in the Night of Power”** [*Al-Qadr*, 1].¹²⁵

¹²³ *Mu'jam Lughat Al-Fuqaha`*, p.358.

¹²⁴ *Kashf Al-Qina' 'an Matn Al-Iqna'* (2/344).

¹²⁵ *Kash Al-Qina' 'an Matn Al-Iqna`*.

It is recommended to seek out this night on all the nights of Ramadan, especially in the last ten odd days of the month. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Seek out *Laylut ul-Qadr* in the last odd ten days of Ramadan."¹²⁶

Scholars have differed over when *Laylut ul-Qadr* occurs. It was reported that it occurs on the eve of the 21st, 23rd, 24th¹²⁷, 25th, 27th, 29th or the last day of Ramadan. These dates were reported in Prophetic traditions and scholars have inferred from them that *Laylut ul-Qadr* moves around the last ten days of Ramadan.

Imam al-Shafi'i (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet ﷺ answered [questions concerning the date of *Laylut ul-Qadr*] according to when it occurred in the year when the question was posed to him. Based on this, *Laylut ul-Qadr* sometimes occurred on the eve of 21st, 23rd or the 27th though its signs could be seen on other nights. Some scholars maintained that Allah kept *Laylut ul-Qadr* concealed so that Muslims would strive to seek it out and exert themselves in worship throughout the month. This is similar to Allah concealing the hour when supplications are answered on Fridays (so that Muslims would supplicate Him throughout the day), His greatest name, whether He is pleased with His servants, the time of death, and the Last Day (so that people would prepare for that day).¹²⁸

The signs of *Laylut ul-Qadr* mentioned in a hadith include the rising of a bright sun without rays. Ubayy Ibn Ka'ab reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The sun rises on the morning following [*Laylut ul-Qadr*] white and without [visible] rays."¹²⁹ Other hadiths compare the sun of the following morning to white copper.¹³⁰ It was reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "It is a bright night, neither hot nor cold."¹³¹ It is so bright

¹²⁶ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/710).

¹²⁷ It was reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The Qur'an was revealed on the twenty fourth day of Ramadan" [recorded by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (4/107).

¹²⁸ Ibn Qudama. *Al-Mughni* (3/61-2).

¹²⁹ Recorded by Muslim (1/525).

¹³⁰ Recorded by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (5/130).

¹³¹ Of moderate heat. Other narrations describe it as clear.

that it is as if moon light reveals the planets; the devils do not come out until after the break of its dawn."¹³²

It was also said that the person who attains *Laylut ul-Qadr* can see all things prostrating to Allah, he can see bright lights everywhere even in the darkest places and can hear the *salams* or the discourse of angels. Among its signs is the acceptance of the supplications that coincided with it.

It must not be supposed that only those who have witnessed the supernatural phenomena associated with it attain *Laylut ul-Qadr*. Allah's bounties are expansive. A person who spends the night worshipping Allah may attain the reward for his worship without witnessing any supernatural phenomenon while another person who did not spend the night in worship may witness the supernatural phenomena associated with it. Although the former is better, what is important is virtuousness and not the witnessing of supernatural phenomena as this may either be a blessing or a temptation.¹³³

It is recommended to spend this night making supplications, especially those that the Prophet ﷺ exhorted 'A'isha to make. When she asked him about what to say on this night, he told her, "Say, 'O Allah! You are the All-forgiving and love to forgive so forgive me."¹³⁴

Zakat ul-Fitr

Zakat ul-fitr is the zakat that must be paid for every Muslim before the prayer of 'Eid ul-fitr. Its specific amount comprises of one *sa'* of the staple food of the country. 'Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made *zakat ul-fitr* incumbent upon every Muslim — free born or slave, man or woman. *Zakat ul-fitr* consists of one *sa'* of dates or barley [recorded in the *Sahih* of Bukhari and the *Sahih* of Muslim]. The family provider pays it on behalf of each of his dependents.

¹³² Recorded by Ibn Habban in his *Sahih* (8/437).

¹³³ See *Nayl Al-Awtar* (4/329-330).

¹³⁴ Recorded by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (6/208).

The condition for its obligation is wealth. A very poor person who does not have food in excess of what he needs to feed himself and his dependents on the night before the *'Eid* is not obliged to pay *zakat ul-fitr*.

Allah legislated *zakat ul-fitr* as a means to make up for any idle talk or offensive act commissioned during the month of fasting as well as to spare the poor from asking for food on the day of *'Eid* which is a time of joy. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Spare them the need to beg on this day."¹³⁵

According to Hanafi scholars, *zakat ul-fitr* becomes obligatory when dawn breaks on the day of *'Eid* while Shafi'i and Hanbali scholars maintained that it becomes obligatory when the sun sets on the last day of Ramadan. Maliki and Hanbali scholars permit paying *zakat ul-fitr* one or two days ahead of its prescribed time. Al-Hasan did not find it blameworthy to pay it one or two days in advance.¹³⁶

According to the soundest position in the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence, it is permissible to pay *zakat ul-fitr* from the first day of Ramadan because it becomes obligatory by reason of the fast of Ramadan as well as by breaking the fast [on the last day]. It is therefore permissible to pay *zakat ul-fitr* at the time of the former.

The recipients of *zakat ul-fitr* are the poor and the destitute as well as the eight categories of *zakat* recipients mentioned in the Qur`an. Allah the Almighty says, **"Alms are for the poor, and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds): for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah. And Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom"** [At *Tau ba*, 60].

It is permissible for a person to give *zakat ul-fitr* to either one or more individuals. The excellence of one over the other depends which most fulfills the needs of the poor.

¹³⁵ *Sunan Al-Daraqutuni* (2/152).

¹³⁶ *Musannaf Ibn Abu Shaybah* (3/115).

Zakat ul-fitr consists of one *sa'* of the staple food of the country such as rice or wheat. One *sa'* equals that which existed at the Prophet's time and is equivalent to 2.04 kg approximately. It is permissible to pay more than one *sa'* and the extra is counted as *sadaqah* for which a person is rewarded by the will of Allah.

It is established in the Prophetic *sunnah* that the principle is to pay *zakat ul-fitr* in the form of food and this is the opinion of the majority of scholars from the followed schools of jurisprudence. However, it is also permissible to pay its equivalent in cash and this fulfills the obligation as maintained by the Hanafi scholars, some of the *tabi'in*, and some scholars both past and present. This is likewise an opinion related from imam Ahmad. Imam ar-Ramli, the Shafi'i scholar, issued a verdict maintaining the permissibility of following the opinion of Abu Hanifa (may Allah be pleased with him) on paying the cash value of *zakat ul-fitr* instead of in grains to the person who requests this.¹³⁷ This is the opinion for fatwa at present. The reason is that the purpose of *zakat* is fulfilling the needs of the poor. This is achieved by giving the cash value of *zakat* and is the closest to benefitting the poor since they would be able to buy what they need. It is also permissible to give *zakat ul-fitr* to a charitable organization that acts as an agent on behalf of the *zakat* payer in distributing the *zakat* to its deserving recipients.

Zakat ul-fitr is not obligatory upon a person who passes away before the sun sets on the last day of Ramadan because a dead person is not among those who are held accountable for obligatory acts of worship.

According to the opinion of the majority of scholars, *zakat ul-fitr* is not due upon a fetus who is not born before the sun sets on the eve of the day of 'Eid because the rulings pertaining to this world do not apply to an unborn child except those related to inheritance and bequests provided it is born alive. However, it is praiseworthy to pay it on behalf of an unborn child. Some scholars such as imam Ahmad preferred this opinion because it was reported that 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) paid *zakat ul-fitr* of the 'Eid of Ramadan on behalf of minors and adults and even on behalf of unborn fetuses. Like the rest of

¹³⁷ Fatawa Ar-Ramli (2/55-6).

voluntary acts of charity, it is considered a commendable act when paid on behalf of one for whom it is not obligatory.

Rulings related to 'Eid ul-Fitr

Man is naturally disposed towards festivities. Since ancient times, people have specified certain days to commemorate a day or event such as victories and births with ceremonies and rejoicing. Each community designated specific days of festivities when people wear their best, manifest their joy, and put away their cares. When the Prophet ﷺ emigrated, he found that the people of Medina celebrated two feasts of pagan origin that they observed with merriment. He did not renounce the idea and sanctioned the celebration of national, social, and religious occasions. He substituted the pagan feasts with occasions connected with two of the greatest Islamic rites — the day of breaking the fast (after Ramadan) and the day of Sacrifice.

Allah established the day of breaking the fast after Ramadan as a feast for Muslims. On this day, people exchange felicitations and visit each other, express their mercy and affection, display their finery, enjoy the provisions of Allah, and express their love and brotherhood, all for the sake of Allah. This joyous day is commenced with the prayer of 'Eid, which Muslims from all social classes offer at the same time in congregation. They gather to glorify and praise Allah and thank Him for His guidance. They are compassionate towards the poor and needy and offer them food and money to spare them the need to beg on this day. On this day, Muslims set aside their worldly troubles to pray with their fellow brothers and exchange felicitations and goodwill, thereby combining between communion with Allah through acts of worship and with fellow Muslims through cooperation, mercy and fellowship.

The day of 'Eid ul-fitr invokes divine bounties. These include:

- It is the first day following the month of Ramadan. On this day, a Muslim regains the freedom to eat and drink after he had willingly abstained from these things for the sake of his Lord and declared his

willingness to forsake these pleasures for the greater purpose of attaining the pleasure of Allah and His forgiveness. On this day, Muslims rejoice over having fulfilled their duty of obeying Allah and attaining its reward. The Messenger ﷺ said, "A faster has two moments of joy: one when he breaks the fast and another when he meets his Lord."¹³⁸

Commemorating the eve of 'Eid ul-fitr

It is recommended to commemorate this day by making remembrance of Allah, praying, or observing other acts of worship, especially offering *salat ul-tasabih* (*Tasabih* prayer) due to its excellence.¹³⁹ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Whoever spends the eve of the two 'Eids in worship, hoping to attain their reward, his heart will remain alive on the day when hearts die."¹⁴⁰ It was suggested that a dead heart refers to one that is passionately fond of this world, disbelief, or the horrors of the Day of Resurrection. Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said this night is commemorated by offering the night prayer in congregation, resolving to pray the dawn prayer in congregation, and making supplications in both.

The takbirs said in the 'Eid

The *takbirs* of the two 'Eid s are a *sunnah* according to the opinion of the majority of scholars. After the verses on fasting, Allah the Almighty says, **"(He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify him in that He has guided you"** [*Al-Baqarah*, 185]. The *takbirs* referred to in this verse are those performed on 'Eid ul-fitr while those mentioned the verses on pilgrimage refer to 'Eid ul-adha. Allah says, **"Remember Allah during the appointed days"** [*Al-Baqarah*, 203], **"To attain benefits and celebrate God's name, on specified days, over the livestock He has provided for them"** [*Al-Hajj*, 28], and **"He has thus made them subject to you, that ye may glorify Allah for His guidance to you"** [*Al-Hajj*, 37].

¹³⁸ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (2/673).

¹³⁹ See *Sunan Al-Tirmidhi* in the chapter of the Tasabih prayer.

¹⁴⁰ Recorded by Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* (1/567), Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat* (1/57), Al-Baihaqi in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (3/319),

Ibn Hazm said, "The *takbirs* made on the eve of the day of *'Eid ul-fitr* are obligatory but those made on the eve of *'Eid ul-adha* are praiseworthy. Allah the Almighty says, **'And to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful'** [*Al-Baqarah*, 183]. Therefore, *takbirs* become obligatory upon the completion of the fast of Ramadan. One instance of *takbir* fulfills the obligation."¹⁴¹

To make *takbir* is to exalt Allah. In the context of *'Eid*, it is to exalt Allah in general and demonstrate His greatness through the words *'Allahu akbar'* which denote Allah's Divine Oneness. This is because the superlative form necessitates the diminution of everything else and any diminutive entity does not deserve divinity. Allah is free from imperfections and, for this reason, *takbir* was legislated in prayers to nullify prostrations to other than Allah. In pilgrimage, Allah is glorified when slaughtering the sacrificial animal to nullify the practice of making sacrifice to idols.

It is recommended to start making *takbir* when the sun sets on the eve of the day of the two *'Eids*. A person is to make *takbir* in his home, on the road, in mosques and in markets by raising his voice (for men) and manifesting the rite of *'Eid* until the imam commences the *'Eid* prayer. Nothing specific concerning the *takbir* formula has been mentioned in the *sunnah*. However, some of the Companions such as Salman al-Farsi made *takbir* by saying:

Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar. La ilaha illa Allah. Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, wa lillahi al-hamd (Allah is the greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest. There is no god save Allah. Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, praise be to Allah).

The order to do this is non-specific since the textual basis for it is unrestricted. Allah the Almighty says, **"[He wants you to complete the prescribed period] and to glorify Him for having guided you"** [*Al-Baqarah*, 185].

¹⁴¹ Ibn Hazm. *Al-Muhalla* (5/89).

Unrestricted matters must remain so until something in Islamic law comes to restrict them. Egyptians have continued to make the following well-known *takbir* since early times:

Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar. La ilaha illa Allah. Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, wa lillahi al-hamd. Allahu akbar kabiran wa al-hamdullahi kathiran wa subhana Allahu bukra wa asila. La ilaha illa Allah wahdu. Sadaqah wa'du wa nasarah 'abdu, wa a'jazza jundu wa hazama al-ahzaba wahdu, la ilaha illa Allah. Wa la na'budu illa iya mukhliseen lahu al-deen wa law kkarihu al-kafirun. Allahuma salli 'ala sayiduna Muhammad wa 'ala al sayiduna Muhammad, wa 'ala as-haba sayiduna Muhammad, wa 'ala ansarsayiduna Muhammad, wa 'ala azwaj sayiduna Muhammad, wa 'ala dhuriyyat sayiduna Muhammad wa salim tasliman kathiran (Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest. There is no god but Allah. Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, praise be to Allah. Allah is Ever Greatest, much praise be to Allah. Glory to Him morning and evening, there is no god but Allah. He fulfilled His promise, gave victory to His slave, strengthened His army, and He alone we worship, being sincere in our religion even though the believers are averse. O Allah! Make your prayers and blessings be upon our master Muhammad, upon the family of our master Muhammad, upon the family of our Master Muhammad, and upon the supporters of our master Muhammad, and upon the wives of our master Muhammad and upon the descendants of our master Muhammad, in abundance).

The above *takbir* is a valid legal formulation. Imam al-Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy on him) commented upon it with the words, "If one says *Allahu akbar* as people do nowadays, it is a good thing. It is likewise good if he adds more *takbirs*. Any remembrance of Allah he adds, I deem good."¹⁴²

It is sanctioned to add praise and blessings upon our master Muhammad ﷺ and his family, Companions, supporters, wives and descendants at the end of *takbir*. The best form of *dhikr* is one that combines the mention of Allah and His Prophet ﷺ. Praising the

¹⁴² *Al-Umm*. Imam Al-Shafi'i.

Prophet ﷺ opens the doors of acceptance for our deeds; scholars have said that the invocations made upon the Prophet ﷺ are always accepted even from hypocrites.

Recommended acts before the 'Eid prayer

It is recommended to wash and perfume the body for both the person who goes to the 'Eid prayer and the one who remains at home. It is likewise desirable for both to dress well due to the words of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ always washed on the day of *fitr* and the day of *adha*."¹⁴³ Al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both) is reported to have said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered us to wear the best clothes and use the best perfume we could find."¹⁴⁴

It is recommended to wash and trim one's hair, use the *siwak*, and eat before the 'Eid prayer. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would not leave his house on the day of *fitr* except after eating [some] dates." In another phrasing of the hadith, he said, "... after eating an odd number of dates."¹⁴⁵

The 'Eid prayer

The 'Eid prayer is a confirmed *sunnah*. The Prophet ﷺ ordered all men and women, even women in menstruation, to attend the prayer.

The time for the 'Eid prayer according to the Shafi'is is between sunrise and midday. They based their opinion on the fact that the 'Eid prayer is associated to a certain event and therefore, the times during which it is impermissible to pray are of no consequence.¹⁴⁶ The majority of scholars have maintained that its time begins when the sun can be seen with the

¹⁴³ Recorded by Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* (1/417) and by Al-Baihaqi in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (93/278).

¹⁴⁴ Recorded by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer* (3/90) and by Al-Hakem in *Al-Mustadrak* (4/256).

¹⁴⁵ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (1/325).

¹⁴⁶ Al-Ramli. *Nihayat Al-Muhtaj* (2/276).

naked eye at a distance of a spear's length above the horizon. The time of 'Eid prayer extends until the beginning of noon.¹⁴⁷

There is a scholarly contention on the best place to perform the 'Eid prayer. Some scholars prefer that it be performed outdoors or in a *musallah* outside the mosque following the Prophet's example. Others such as the Shafi'is favor its performance in a mosque if there is enough room to accommodate all the congregation due to the exaltedness of the place. In response to the evidence cited by those who prefer the *musallah*, Shafi'i scholars maintained that the Prophet's mosque at that time could not accommodate all of those who wished to perform the prayer. They argued that when enough room is available, it is better to hold the 'Eid prayer in the mosque because the reason for holding it in a *musallah* i.e. limited space, has ceased to exist. This is because rulings change depending on the absence or presence of an excuse.

The 'Eid prayer consists of two *rak'as* that are performed like the rest of the prayers. A person performing the 'Eid prayer is to make the intention and this is the minimum requirement. The optimal manner of performing the 'Eid prayer comprises the following:

In addition to the opening '*Allahu Akbar*' and the one said before bowing, '*Allahu Akbar*' is repeated seven times in the first *rak'a* and five times in the second *rak'a* not counting the '*Allahu Akbar*' for rising from prostration and before bowing and those said before reciting the Qur'an. It was reported that in the prayer of the two 'Eids, the Prophet ﷺ repeated '*Allahu Akbar*' seven times in the first *rak'a* and five times in the second, not counting the *takbir* of the prayer.¹⁴⁸ Kathir Ibn 'Abdullah narrated the following report through his father who reported it through his own father, "In the prayer of the two 'Eids, the Prophet ﷺ made *takbir* seven times in the first *rak'a* before reciting the Qur'an and five times in the second *rak'a* before reciting the Qur'an."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ See *Rad Al-Muhtar 'ala Al-Dur Al-Mukhtar* (1/558) and Al-Dusouki's commentary on *Al-Sharh Al-Kabeer* (1/396).

¹⁴⁸ Recorded by Al-Daraqutuni in his *Sunan* (2/48) and by Al-Baihaqi in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (3/285).

¹⁴⁹ Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi (2/416) and by Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* (1/407).

It is a *sunnah* to perform the 'Eid prayer in a group. This feature of the 'Eid prayer was transmitted from the *salaf* to the *khalaf*. A late comer who joins the prayer after the imam has said all or some of the *takbirs* is not to make up what he has missed. This is because unlike the opening 'Allahu Akbar' that must be made up if missed, the *takbirs* are considered time restricted recommended *dhikr*.

It is a *sunnah* to raise the hands with every 'Allahu Akbar' because it was reported that 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) raised his hands every time he said 'Allahu Akbar' in the two 'Eid prayers.¹⁵⁰ It is recommended to pause between every two *takbirs* for the time it takes to recite one verse to make *dhikr*. This is because it was reported that before the 'Eid, al-Waleed Ibn 'Uqba approached Ibn Mas'ud, Abu Musa, and Hudhaifa and told them, "The time of the 'Eid is drawing close. What is the manner of making *takbir*?" 'Abdullah told him, "You begin by making the opening supplication and then praise your Lord and invoke blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ. Then you supplicate Allah and make *takbir* and repeat this, and then make *takbir* and repeat this, and then make *takbir* and repeat this, and then make *takbir* and repeat this"¹⁵¹ In another version of the report, al-Ash'ari and Hudhaifa (may Allah be pleased with them) said, "Abu 'Abdul-Rahman has indeed said the truth."¹⁵²

It is a *sunnah* to recite the chapter of Al-A'la after Al-Fatiha in the first *rak'a* and Al-Ghashiya in the second or the chapter of Qaf in the first *rak'a* and Iqtaraba in the second following the example of the Prophet ﷺ.¹⁵³ It is a *sunnah* to recite these Qur`anic chapters audibly since this is how the *khalaf* made their prayer following the example of the *salaf*.¹⁵⁴

After the end of the 'Eid prayer, it is a *sunnah* for the imam to deliver two sermons separated by one interval. It is recommended to open the

¹⁵⁰ Recorded by *Al-Baihaqi* in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (3/293).

¹⁵¹ Recorded by *Al-Baihaqi* in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (3/291).

¹⁵² Recorded by *Al-Tahawi* in *Sharh Ma'ani Al-Athar* (4/348).

¹⁵³ Recorded by *Muslim* (3/15, 3/21).

¹⁵⁴ See *Al-Majmu' Sharh Al-Muhadhab* (20, 21).

first sermon by saying '*Allahu Akbar*' nine times and to open the second by saying it seven times in addition to invoking Allah and His Messenger ﷺ and exhort the people to be mindful of Allah the Almighty and read the Qur`an. The imam then instructs the people on *zakat ul-fitr*. It is recommended that the congregation listen to the sermons due to the words of Abu Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) on the day of 'Eid who said, "The first thing one does, or what is customary in our time, is to offer the ['Eid] prayer followed by the sermon. No one is to leave until the imam delivers the sermon."¹⁵⁵ A person who arrives late for the 'Eid prayer that is held in a *musallah* (that is used only for the 'Eid prayer and not for the other prayers) and who joins the group when the imam is giving the sermon, is not to occupy himself with making up the missed 'Eid prayer. Instead, he must listen to the sermon because it is among the *sunnahs* of the 'Eid that must not be neglected.

There are two opinions on arriving late for the 'Eid prayer when it is held in a mosque. The first is that a person is to offer the prayer of greeting the mosque but not the 'Eid prayer because the imam has not finished performing the *sunnah* of the 'Eid, so he is not to occupy himself with making up the prayer.

The second opinion states that a person who arrives late at the mosque is to offer the 'Eid prayer because it is of greater precedence and importance than the prayer of greeting the mosque. Since, like the prescribed prayer, the 'Eid prayer waives the necessity of offering the prayer of greeting the mosque, it takes priority over it.¹⁵⁶

Like the rest of the voluntary prayers associated with the prescribed prayers, it is permissible for a person who misses the 'Eid prayer to perform it later in the day, the next day, or whenever he wishes. He may also make up the prayer in the same manner of the 'Eid prayer with the *takbirs* if he so wishes. This is the opinion of imams Malik and al-Shafi'i (may Allah be pleased with them) which they based on one report from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that when he missed the 'Eid prayer with the group in Basra, he called together his family and

¹⁵⁵Recorded by Ibn Mundhir in *Al-Awsat* (94/272).

¹⁵⁶See *Al-Majmu' Sharh Al-Muhadhab* (5/27).

slaves. He then had his slave 'Abdullah Ibn Abu 'Utba lead them in a two *rak'a* prayer with *takbirs*. A person is free to make up the prayer either alone or with a group and in the *musallah* or wherever he wishes.

It is permissible for a person who misses the 'Eid prayer to offer a four *rak'a* prayer like a voluntary prayer and he is likewise free to make *salam* between each two *rak'as*. This is based on the words of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, "Whoever misses the 'Eid prayer is to offer four *rak'as* [in its stead]." ¹⁵⁷ It was reported that 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) once ordered a man on the day of *fitr* or the day of sacrifice to double the number of *rak'as* that the people in the mosque had prayed i.e. he ordered him to offer four *rak'as*. ¹⁵⁸

If a person joins the imam when he is sitting for the Testification of Faith, he is to follow the imam's actions and when the imam concludes the prayer with *salam*, he is to stand up and pray two *rak'as* along with the *takbirs*. This is because he has caught up with a portion of the prayer and must therefore offer it in the same number of *rak'as* [as the 'Eid prayer] as he would for a prescribed prayer.

Recommended measures for the 'Eid prayer

It is a *sunnah* for a Muslim to take advantage of this joyful event and provide for his family in abundance. Islamic law did not mention a specific kind of food in connection with this occasion. It is permissible to eat certain kinds of food that are associated with 'Eid *ul-fitr* provided one does not overburden oneself or establish this as a practice to be followed such that whoever does not observe it is considered to have committed an enormity. In such a case, it becomes an innovation in religion because it ascribes to the *sunnah* what is not part of it. ¹⁵⁹

It is commendable to manifest joy on this occasion. The fact that the two 'Eids replaced the pagan festivals previously held in pre-Islamic Arabia

¹⁵⁷ Recorded by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer* (99/306).

¹⁵⁸ Recorded by Al-Baihaqi in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (30/130).

¹⁵⁹ Ibn Al-Haj. *Al-Madkhal* (1/287).

(and which were held on different days than the Muslims feasts), indicates the permissibility of emulating pre-Islamic festivities provided they do not include any prohibited action or distractions from obligatory acts of worship. It is permissible to engage in recreation and joy after the hardships of this act of worship.¹⁶⁰

When the *'Eid* prayer coincides with a Friday

1- Does the *'Eid* prayer supersede the Friday Prayer if the *'Eid* falls on a Friday?

2- Does the *'Eid* prayer supersede the noon prayer if the *'Eid* falls on a Friday?

Answer

1- There is a scholarly difference of opinion on whether the *'Eid* prayer supersedes the Friday prayer if the *'Eid* coincides with a Friday. The debate is based on difference of opinion among scholars over the authenticity of the hadiths and non-Prophetic reports on this issue on the one hand and on their meaning on the other. Consequently, the matter is unrestricted and capacious because this is something over which there is a difference of opinion and one must therefore not object to any position.

The Friday prayer is to be held in mosques because this is the principle and the more religiously position concerning it. A person who finds it difficult to attend the Friday prayer and wishes to follow the dispensation and the opinion of scholars who waive its obligation in favor of the *'Eid* prayer may do so provided he prays the Noon prayer in its stead.

2- Waiving the Noon prayer on Friday and sufficing with the *'Eid* prayer in lieu of it: The practice of the Muslim community past and present is that if the Friday prayer is waived due to a dispensation or excuse or if it is missed, the Noon prayer must be performed in its stead.

¹⁶⁰ *Subul Al-Salam* (1/436).

Social ties and exchanging visits

Since the *'Eid* is a time to be happy and manifest joy, the first thing to rejoice over are the bounties of Allah and His mercy. Allah the Almighty says, **"Say: "In the bounty of Allah. And in His mercy,--in that let them rejoice": that is better than the (wealth) they hoard"** [*Yunus*, 58].

Out of His grace, Allah legislated acts that generate joy and at the same time earn us His pleasure such as visiting the righteous and relatives, both the living and the dead. This is recommended during the *'Eid* because it is an especially opportune time to perform acts of worship and draw close to Allah.

It is permissible to exchange visits during the two *'Eids*. 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "Abu Bakr came to my house while I had in my company two slave girls from the Ansar (helpers) who were chanting the song sung at the battle of Bu'ath; they were not singers. Abu Bakr exclaimed, 'The pipes of Satan in the house of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and on the day of *'Eid!*' So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told him, 'O Abu Bakr! Every nation has a festival and this is ours.'"¹⁶¹

Ibn Hajar transmitted from scholarly opinions that Prophet ﷺ would take a different route on the way back from *'Eid* prayer to visit his relatives from among the living and the dead and maintain ties of kinship.

Allah, the Legislator, commanded Muslims to maintain ties of kinship, an act that accrues great rewards both in this world and in the Hereafter. He moreover made it the reason for abundant provisions, longevity, or remembrance after death. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever desires to increase his provisions and prolong his life should maintain ties of kinship."¹⁶² By maintaining the ties of kinship, Allah maintains ties with His servants in every sense of the word. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah said, 'I am the Compassionate. I created ties of kinship and derived a name for it from My own. I will maintain ties with whoever maintains it and sever

¹⁶¹ Recorded by Al-Bukhari (1/324) and Muslim (2/607).

¹⁶² Recorded by Bukhari (5/2232) and Muslim (4/1982).

ties with whoever severs it."¹⁶³ Allah even made maintaining ties of kinship a reason for entering Paradise on the Day of Judgment and a protection from the dread of torture of this day. This is because he has treated his relatives well in this world and therefore deserves security in the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ said, "O people! Spread peace among you, feed others, maintain the ties of kinship, and stand up in prayer at night when people are asleep and you will enter Paradise in security."¹⁶⁴

Visiting the dead

The principle in visiting the dead is that it is a *sunnah*. Scholars have unanimously concurred that it is recommended for men. This is based on the words of the Prophet ﷺ who said, "I used to forbid you from three things until it became clear to me otherwise: I had prohibited you from visiting graveyards, then it became clear to me that it softens the heart, brings tears to the eyes, and serves as a reminder of the Hereafter. Therefore, visit them but do not utter words that anger your Lord ..." ¹⁶⁵ It is recommended to visit the dead for they reap benefit from Qur`anic recitations and supplications made for them and from the *sadaqah* paid on their behalf. And because the spirit of the dead remains connected to its grave and is not severed, they find solace from these visits. It is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever passes by the grave of someone he knew in this world and greets him, the deceased will recognize him and return his greeting."¹⁶⁶ The Prophet ﷺ also encouraged Muslims to visit graveyards by promising forgiveness and rewards; he said, "Whoever visits his parent's graves or the grave of one of them every Friday, will be forgiven and will be written as one of the pious."¹⁶⁷

In Hanafi jurisprudence, it is recommended for women to visit graves. According to the majority of scholars, this is permissible though disliked

¹⁶³ Recorded by Abu Dawud (1/530).

¹⁶⁴ Recorded by Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* (2/1083) and by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (5/451).

¹⁶⁵ Recorded by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (3/237).

¹⁶⁶ Recorded by Al-Khatib in *Tarikh Baghdad* (6/137) and Ibn Asaker in *Tarikh Dimashq* (10/380).

¹⁶⁷ Recorded by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat* and by Al-Baihaqi in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (6/201).

except for the Prophet's grave due to women's frail emotions and lack of fortitude.

There is no specific time during which it is recommended to visit the dead and the matter is capacious. However, since Allah has made the two 'Eids a time for joy, it is not recommended to renew grief on these occasions. However, there is no harm in visiting the dead during the 'Eid just as one used to visit them during their lifetime if this does not entail renewing sorrows.

The merit of fasting six days of Shawwal

From among the recommended virtuous acts associated with the month of Ramadan, is fasting six days of the month of Shawwal because of the Prophet's words, "Whoever fasts Ramadan and follows it with six days of the month of Shawwal, it is as if he has fasted for an entire year."¹⁶⁸ The legal premise for this is the Qur`anic verse demonstrating that a reward for an action is multiplied ten times. Allah the Almighty says, "**He that doeth good shall have ten times as much to his credit**" [*Al-An'am*, 160].

Based on this, the reward of fasting one month is equivalent to the reward of fasting ten months and the reward of fasting six days of the month of Shawwal is equivalent to the reward of fasting two months i.e. sixty days, the sum of the reward equaling that of an entire year. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah rewards an action ten-fold. Consequently, the reward of [fasting] one month is equivalent to [fasting] ten months and fasting six days [of Shawwal] after breaking the fast of Ramadan is equivalent to [fasting] two months."¹⁶⁹

It is recommended to fast the six days of Shawwal consecutively immediately after the day of 'Eid (it is impermissible to fast on the day of 'Eid)¹⁷⁰ since this entails hastening to do good even though the reward is obtained by fasting any day during the month of Shawwal. Whoever

¹⁶⁸ Recorded by Muslim (2/822).

¹⁶⁹ Recorded by Al-Nisa`i in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* (2/163).

¹⁷⁰ The Hanafis have a different opinion and maintain that fasting on the day of 'Eid is merely disliked.

distributes the six days over the month of Shawwal fulfills the *sunnah* due to general implication of the hadith.¹⁷¹

It is desirable for a person with missed fast days due to an excuse to make them up before fasting the six days of Shawwal. A group of scholars disapproves of performing a voluntary fast before making up unperformed fast days. It is obligatory for a person who refrains from fasting without an excuse to make up his unperformed fast days immediately [after the day of 'Eid].¹⁷²

Whoever refrains from fasting the entire month of Ramadan due to an excuse, is to make it up in the month in Shawwal and follow it up with six days from the month of Dhul-Qi'da. He may either follow the opinion of those who recommend making up voluntary fasts associated with the prescribed fast or the opinion of those who maintain the permissibility of fasting the six days of Shawwal in Dhul-Qi'da. By following either position, he will attain the reward of this voluntary fast.

A person who wishes to make up his unperformed fast days of Ramadan in the month of Shawwal without fasting additional days, fulfills the obligation of making up his unperformed fast days as well as the *sunnah* of fasting the six voluntary days and attains their reward if his unperformed fast days complete six days. However, he must make the intention to make up what he has missed of Ramadan and not that of fasting the voluntary days of Shawwal. And since he has made up his unperformed fast days in Shawwal, he will also attain the reward of the six voluntary days. This is the opinion of some scholars and the *mu'tamad* position (which the school depends on) within the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence. The luminary ar-Ramli (may Allah have mercy on him) issued a verdict in response to a question concerning a man who had some unperformed fast days of Ramadan who wishes to make them up in Shawwal. He was asked, "Would he fulfill the obligation of making up the unperformed fast days of Ramadan as well as earn the reward of fasting the six days of Shawwal? And is there any textual proof for this?" He replied, "He will fulfill the obligation of making up the unperformed

¹⁷¹ See *Al-Majmu' Sharh Al-Muhadhab* (6/427).

¹⁷² *Tuhfat Al-Muhtaj fi Sharh Al-Minhaj* (3/457).

fast days of Ramadan ... he will also earn the reward of fasting the six days of Shawwal."¹⁷³

Conclusion

Egypt's Dar Al-Ifta congratulates Muslims across the globe on the occasion of the blessed month of Ramadan. We hope that in this month, the community attains the highest degree of excellence and benevolence in both religious and worldly matters. We can achieve this by profiting from the times of virtue through obeying Allah the Almighty and doing everything we have been commanded and exhorted to do. It is a confirmed fact that during these times Allah sends His bounties and victory, and elevates ranks. In this manner Allah rectifies our religious and worldly affairs.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "There are certain days of the year on which Allah the Almighty sends gifts, so exert yourselves (in worship), perchance one of you will attain one of its gifts after which he will never be wretched."¹⁷⁴

He also said, "Do good throughout the year and embrace the gifts of Allah's mercy for Allah bestows His mercy upon whoever He pleases. And ask Him to conceal your shortcomings and protect you from your fears."¹⁷⁵

These virtuous times present those with shortcomings with an excellent opportunity to have their sins forgiven through repentance, desisting from sins, and taking recourse to Allah. This is because these times comprise manifold mercies, bounties, and the cause of happiness; they also eliminate the cause of unhappiness. It was reported that the Prophet ﷺ ascended the pulpit and said, "Amen, amen, amen." [The Companions] asked him, "O Messenger of Allah! Why do you say this?" He replied, "Jibril told me, 'Wretched is he who is not forgiven in Ramadan!' I told him, 'Amen.' He then said, 'Wretched is he who does

¹⁷³ *Fatawa Ar-Ramli* (2/66).

¹⁷⁴ Recorded by *Al-Tabarani* in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat* (3/180) and in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer* (1/250).

¹⁷⁵ Recorded by *Al-Tabarani* in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer* (1/250) and by *Al-Baihaqi* in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (2/42).

not enter Paradise on account [of his dutifulness] to one or both of his parents.' I said, 'Amen.' He then said, 'Wretched is he who does not invoke peace and blessings upon you when your name is mentioned before him.' I said, 'Amen.' ”¹⁷⁶

We ask Allah the Almighty to grant us success to do benevolent deeds during this noble month and to confer His forgiveness and satisfaction upon us, and accept our deeds and prayers.

Amen

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our master Muhammad and upon his household and praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

¹⁷⁶ Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah in his *Sahih* (3/192), Ibn Haban in his *Sahih* (2/140), Al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat* (9/17), and it was recorded in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer* (2/243).