

RAMADÂN - رَمَضَانَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

Oh you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, just as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may guard against evil... [al-Qur'an 2:183]

The month of Ramadân is that in which the Qur'ân was sent down: a guidance for mankind and clear proofs of guidance and the criterion (of right and wrong)... [al-Qur'an 2:185]

The virtues of fasting and other activities during the month of Ramadân are enough to fill an entire volume. In this article we will try, by the mercy of Allâh, to summarize some important points. A good book to study during Ramadân is *Virtues of Ramadhân* by Shaikhul-Hadîth Maulana Mohammad Zakariyya Kandhalvi (*rahimahu-allâh*).

The month of Ramadân is a most blessed month, in which the reward for performing a *nafl* will be as the reward of a *fard* in any other time of the year; and the reward for performing a *fard* will be as the reward of seventy *fard* in any other time of the year. It is a month of patience, whose reward is *Jannah*. It is the month of sympathy for one's fellowmen. Whoever provides food to someone to break their fast, he will have forgiveness for his sins and freedom from the fire of *Jahannam* (Hell). The first of this month brings Allâh's Mercy; the middle brings His Forgiveness and the end brings emancipation from the Hellfire. In this month the devils are chained and confined, as a result of which evil is diminished. In this month, the Qur'ân was sent down from *al-Lawh-ul-Mahfûz* (the Protected Tablet) to the *Samâ-ud-Dunyâ* (heaven of the earth), from where it was revealed bit by bit over a span of twenty-three years.

During this month every Muslim should endeavor to read the Qur'ân at least once from cover to cover. Our great and pious predecessors and scholars such as Imâm Shâfi' and Imâm Abu Hanîfah (*rahimahum-allâh*) used to complete the reading of the entire Qur'ân 60 times over in this month. Hazrat Jibra'îl (*alayhis-salâm*) used to recite or listen to the recitation of the entire Qur'ân by our *Nabi* Muhammad (ﷺ *sallallâhu-alayhi-wa-sallam*) in the month of Ramadân. Also during this month, *Rasûlullâh* (ﷺ *sallallâhu-alayhi-wa-sallam*) advised us to make much *dhikr* and *istighfâr*. [*Virtues of Ramadhân*]

Sighting the Moon

It is *wâjib kifâyah* to look for the moon on the night of the 29th of Sha'bân. If some people from the locality do this, the obligation is removed from the entire community. If no one goes to sight the moon, it will be a sin upon the entire community. If the sky is not clear, then the witness of a single upright, mature, intelligent Muslim is sufficient. If the sky is clear, then it is necessary that a large group of people should bear witness to the sighting such that there can be no doubt in the report. If the moon is not sighted, then 30 days of Sha'bân are to be completed. [*Rahnama-e-Mudarrisîn* Ml. Muhammad Tâhir Rahîmi, Multan, Pakistan; *Noorul-Eidâh* Imâm Shurunbulâli; *Bahishti Zewar*]

Du'â (Prayer) Upon Sighting the Moon of Ramadân

اللَّهُمَّ أَهْلَهُ عَلَيْنَا بِإِيمَانٍ وَالسَّلَامَةِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ
وَالتَّوْفِيقِ لِمَا تَحِبُّ وَتَرْضَى ، رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ .

Allâhumma ahillahû 'alaynâ bil-yumni wal-îmâni; was-salâmati wal-islâmi;
wat-tawfeeqi li mâ tuhibbu wa tardâ; rabbî wa rabbukal-lâh.

Oh Allâh! Let the moon appear over us with blessing and *Imân*; with peace and *Islâm*; with the ability for us to practice that which You love and which pleases You. (O moon): Your Lord and my Lord is Allâh.

Intention for the Fast

It is necessary to make intention for the validity of the fast. The intention may be expressed in the heart, but it is much more preferable to recite the following statement of intention verbally before the beginning of the dawn:

وَبِصَوْمٍ غَدٍ نَوَيْتُ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ

I have the intention of observing a fast of the month of Ramadân tomorrow.

Wa bi sawmi ghadin-nawaytu min shahri ramadân.

Prayer at Time of Breaking the Fast (Iftâr)

It is *sunnat* to make *iftâr* immediately after sunset and not to delay. The *iftâr* should not be so long that the Maghrib prayer is delayed or missed. There are several recommended *du'â* at the time of *iftâr*. Among them,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي لَكَ صُمْتُ ، وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ ،
وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ ، وَعَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ

Oh Allâh! Truly for You did I fast, and in You do I believe and upon You do I place my trust, and with Your provision have I broken the fast.

Allâhumma innî laka *sumtu*; wa bika *âmantu*; wa 'alayka *tawakkaltu*; wa 'alâ *rizqika* *aftartu*.

Warning

With regard to fasting, the Prophet (ﷺ *sallallâhu-alayhi-wa-sallam*) has left an important warning which we must endeavor to heed: "Many are those who fast but whose fast brings them only hunger and thirst; and many are those who pray at night, but whose prayer only results in sleeplessness." Abstaining from carnal pleasures is not the only condition of the fast. The fast is also meant to strengthen the spiritual and moral character of the Muslim. Thus, all actions of the hands, feet, eyes, ears, and especially the tongue, must be kept in strict accordance with the *Sharî'ah*. The Prophet (ﷺ *sallallâhu-alayhi-wa-sallam*) repeatedly emphasized the avoidance of lying, backbiting, gossip, cheating, swearing, obscene, and useless talk while fasting. All these actions can ruin the fast. May Allâh guide us and help us.

Tarâweeh

Rasûlullâh (ﷺ) *sallallâhu-alayhi-wa-sallam*) said: “The one who observes the *Tarâweeh* prayer at night during *Ramadân* with complete faith and devotion, only for the sake of the reward of the Hereafter, will have all his previous sins forgiven by Allâh.” [Agreed upon] The *Tarâweeh* prayer starts from the evening that the moon of *Ramadân* is sighted up till (but not including) the night of ‘*Eid*. Imâm Nawawi (*rahimahu-allâh*) has written about this prayer:

الأذكار - نوح الدين أبي بكر بن شريك النوري
الإمام الحافظ شيخ الإسلام
الشافعي ١٠١٣ هـ

باب أذكار صلاة التراويح

أعلم أن صلاة التراويح سنة باتفاق العلماء، وهي عشرون ركعة يسلم من كل ركعتين، وصفة نفس الصلاة كصفة باقي الصلوات على ما تقدم بيانه، ويحيى فيها جميع الأذكار المتقدمة كدعاء الافتتاح، واستكمال الأذكار الباقية، واستيفاء الشهد، والدعاء بعده، وغير ذلك مما تقدم، وهذا وإن كان ظاهراً معروفاً فإنما نبهت عليه لتساهل أكثر الناس فيه، وحذفهم أكثر الأذكار، والصواب ما سبق. وأما القراءة فالمختار الذي قاله الأكثرون وأطبق الناس على العمل به أن تقرأ الختمة بكاملها في التراويح جميع الشهر. فيقرأ في كل ليلة نحو جزء من ثلاثين جزءاً. ويستحب أن يرتل القراءة ويبسها، وليحذر من التطويل عليهم بقراءة أكثر من جزء، وليحذر كل الحذر مما اعتاده جهلة أئمة كثير من المساجد من قراءة سورة الأنعام بكاملها في الركعة الأخيرة في الليلة السابعة من شهر رمضان، زاعمين أنها نزلت جملة، وهذه بدعة قبيحة وجهالة ظاهرة مشتملة على مفسدات كثيرة، سبق بيانها في كتاب تلاوة القرآن.

Know that the *Tarâweeh* prayer is a *sunnah* by the consensus of the scholars and it is 20 *rak'ât* with *tasleem* between every two. And the prayer is performed just like all other prayers, with *rukû'*, *sujûd*, etc.

As for the recitation, the correct way which has been expressed by most of the scholars and acted upon by the people is that the entire Qur'ân should be completed in the *Tarâweeh* of this month. Every night, about one *juz* (1/30th of the Qur'ân) should be recited. It is preferable that the recitation be at a steady pace and not be longer than a *juz* every night, so that the people are not put to hardship. And especially avoid the baseless innovation of reciting the entire *Sûrah al-An'âm* in one *rak'ah* of the 7th of *Ramadân*, thinking that it was revealed all at once...

[*Kitâbul-Adhkâr* Imâm Nawawi]

As mentioned above, the *Tarâweeh* is performed in units of two *rak'ât*. After every four units, a short pause is observed during which one may rest quietly or recite supplications such as the following *tasbeeh*:

سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْمُلْكِ وَالْمَلَكُوتِ سُبْحَانَ
ذِي الْعِزَّةِ وَالْعُظْمَةِ وَالْهَيْبَةِ وَالْقُدْرَةِ
وَالْكِبْرِيَاءِ وَالْجَبْرُوتِ سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْحَيِّ
الَّذِي لَا يَنَامُ وَلَا يَمُوتُ سُبْحَانَ قُدُّوسٍ
رَبَّنَا وَرَبِّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوْحِ
اللَّهُمَّ اجْرِنَا مِنَ النَّارِ
يَا مُجِيرُ يَا مُجِيرُ يَا مُجِيرُ

Glorified is the Owner of the Kingdom of earth and heaven; Glorified is the Possessor of Honour, Magnificence, Awe, Power, Greatness and Omnipotence; Glorified is the Sovereign, the Living, Who neither sleeps nor dies; Exceedingly glorified and sanctified is our Lord and the Lord of the angels and the Spirit (*Jibreel*); Oh Allâh! Save us from the Fire: Oh Mighty Savior, Oh Mighty Savior, Oh Mighty Savior!

Subhâna dhil-mulki wal-malakût. Subhâna dhil 'izzati wal-'azmati wal-haybati wal-qudrati wal-kibriyâ'i wal-jabarût. Subhânal-malikil-hayyil-ladhî lâ yanâmu wa lâ yamût. Subbûhun quddûsun rabbunâ wa rabbul-malâ'ikati war-rûh. Allâhumma ajrinâ minan-nâri; Yâ mujîru; Yâ mujîru; Yâ mujîru.

(During *Ramadân* only, the 3 *rak'ât* of *Witr* prayer is also performed in congregation after the *Tarâweeh*.)

Laylatul-Qadr

Among the nights of *Ramadân*, the “Night of Power,” *Laylatul-Qadr*, is a night of extremely great blessing. The virtues and reward of good actions on this night are multiplied by 1000 months, as mentioned in the Qur'ân itself. *Laylatul-Qadr* most probably occurs on one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of the month. It is recommended to search for it and involve oneself in extra worship and recitation of the Qur'ân. The best *du'â* to make on that night is:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوفٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

Oh Allâh! You are the One who grants pardon for sins; You love to pardon; So pardon me.

Allâhumma innaka 'afuwun tuhibbul-'afwa fa'fu 'anni.

(This supplication is related in a famous *hadîth* by Hadrat Â'ishah *radhiyallâhu-anha*)

I'tikâf

The practice of remaining in the masjid for a certain period of time, with intention of doing so, is called *I'tikâf*. It is *sunnat mu'akkadah* '*alal-kifâyah* (upon a community) to perform *I'tikâf* in the last ten days of *Ramadân*. If even one person from a particular locality remains in the masjid then the *sunnah* is fulfilled on behalf of the community. But if no one performs this duty, then the entire community is sinful for having neglected to fulfill a *sunnah*. The purpose of this seclusion is that the heart should get attached to Allâh and that one should remain in a constant state of His remembrance, with no distraction of worldly affairs. The detailed rulings of *I'tikâf* may be found in various Islamic books, such as *Bahishti Zewar* (Ml. Ashraf Ali Thanvi) or *Kitâbus-Sawm* (Mufti A.H.Elias). Note, *I'tikâf* can only be performed in an established masjid by men, and is performed by women in the room of the house where they say their prayers.

'Eid

Rasûlullâh (*sallallâhu-alayhi-wa-sallam*) said: “The heart of the person who remains awake (in worship) during the night of ‘*Eid-ul-Fitr* and ‘*Eid-ul-Adhâ* will not be dead on the Day when the hearts will be dead.” [*Tabrâni*] The night preceding the day of ‘*Eid* is an auspicious occasion which should be observed with reverence and worship. The greatest reward of doing so, mentioned above, is that the hearts will not be smitten with terror and fear on the Day of Judgment when the upheavals of that Day will be so fearsome that men will appear to be intoxicated.

(The rulings related to the ‘*Eid* prayer and *Sadaqatul-Fitr* will *insha-Allâh* be discussed towards the end of the month.)

وَ آخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ .

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FASTING

Fear of Allâh;
Abstinence
from Sin;
Steadfastness
on *Shari'ah*;
Tolerance in
Difficulty;
Integrity in
Dealing;
Nobility in
Character;
Gratefulness
for Allâh's
favors.