

Ramadan is the month of blessings

Ramadan is a great blessed month, to which the hearts of Muslims attach, their souls yearn for it, and expect it every year longingly and passionately.

During Ramadan, Muslims live distinctive spiritual atmosphere where fasting, Salah, charity, and reciting the Qur'an are combined to purify their souls, reassure their hearts, and achieve the great wisdom for which Allah ordained fasting, as He ordained for previous nations. Allah the Most High says (which means): "O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fast) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious)." [Surat Al Baqarah:183].

Piety is awakened and enhanced in the hearts of Muslims while performing this obligatory duty in obedience to Allah and achieving His satisfaction. Piety is the shield which guards these hearts against the corruption of fasting by sins, even if they are just thoughts.

Piety is the objective which the souls of righteous people long for, and fasting is one of its mediums and a way delivering to it. Therefore, the Qur'an gave much care to piety and made it a clear target for people to seek and achieve through fasting: "That you may become Muttaqûn (pious)."

In order to fast perfectly, we should get ourselves prepared for Ramadan by:

- Repentance and returning to the way of Allah.
- Abandonment of amusements and distracting matters.
- Abandonment of rivalries, enmity, and disputes with Muslim brothers, and freeing oneself of grievances.

All these are parts of righteous works that draw us closer to Allah and more likely to be guided to righteous work during that month.

We must know the rulings, Sunan, and etiquette of fasting so that we can fast as our Prophet (peace be upon him) fasted, since Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) does not accept actions except if they are in harmony with the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Fasting is: Worshipping Allah (may He be Exalted) through abstaining from food, drink, and sexual intercourse from the break of true dawn to sunset.

It is obligatory on every:

- Muslim,
- Sane,
- Adult,
- Able,
- Non-traveling.

- Another condition for women, which is: not to be menstruating nor a newly-delivered woman.

It is a condition for fasting to recall the intention of fasting from the preceding night. It is desirable to observe Suhur (pre-dawn meal) by eating or drinking before dawn even by having few dry dates. It is part of the Sunnah to delay Suhur unless it is feared of the dawn break.

It is desirable also to hasten Iftar (breaking the fast) by eating some dry dates. During fasting a Muslim is required to avoid the following:

- Anything that may corrupt his fast.
- Sins that reduce the reward.

As for Muftirat (things that nullify the fast), they are:

- Eating, drinking, things that have the same ruling such as nutrition injections, and anything may reach the stomach deliberately through the mouth even if it is not edible.
- Sexual intercourse and deliberate ejaculation by any means.
- Flow of menstrual blood or puerperium from a woman.
- Deliberate vomit.

It is safer for a fasting person not to apply cupping or donate blood during fasting since it is controversial among scholars to be one of the nullifiers of fasting.

All these nullifiers entail the doer to make up for that day, except in the case of sexual intercourse which entails compensation and expiation.

It is not part of nullifiers to use non-nutritious injections, asthma inhaler, heart-attacks pills that are placed under the tongue, using arak tooth brush or the regular toothbrush and paste, nor tasting food for a need. A fasting person should be cautious not to let something reach his stomach.

A person who ejaculates during sleep in the daytime of Ramadan, or wakes up Junub (in the state of major impurity) until Fajr, or overwhelmed by vomit must continue his fast as it is still valid.

Breaking the fast is permissible for:

- The sick and those who have the same ruling such as old people who cannot observe fasting.
- A non-resident.
- A pregnant or suckling women who fear for themselves and for their babies.

People who have excuses not to fast must make up for the days they missed after Ramadan. As for those who are not able to compensate such as people of incurable

diseases or old people who are harmed by fasting, they must pay an expiation by feeding one needy person for each day they did not fast.

Sins reduce the reward of a fasting person and may totally cancel the reward. So, it is obligatory for a Muslim to feel the greatness of this month, thank Allah (may He be Exalted) for attending the month, and seek His Help in investing its hours in things that fix his heart, purify his soul, and draw him closer to mercy and forgiveness. Of the most important things a person must be keen on during Ramadan is reciting, pondering over, and seeking the guidance of the Qur'an. Allah the Most High says (which means):

"The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)."

The benefits and impacts of fasting are countless to the extent that some non-Muslims observe fasting as a means for cure and treatment, moreover they wrote books on fasting.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, for guiding us to this great religion which contains the goodness of this world and the next.