

## **Ramadaan: Its Virtues and Superiority**

### *1. What Is Ramadaan?*

#### 1.1 The month of the Quran

Allah – the Most High – said: "The month of Ramadaan in which the Qur'aan was revealed, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance of the Criterion between right and wrong. So whosoever of you sights the crescent for the month of Ramadaan, he must fast that month."

[Surah al-Baqarah 2:18]

#### 1.2 The Month of Mercy and Forgiveness

The Prophet sallallaahu'alaihi wasallam said:

Every action of the son of Adam is given manifold reward, each good deed receiving ten times its like, up to seven hundred times. Allah the Most High said, 'Except for fasting, for it is for Me and I will give recompense for it, he leaves off his desires and his food for Me.' for the fasting person there are two times of joy; a time when he breaks his fast and a time of joy when he meets his Lord, and the smell coming from the mouth of the fasting person is better with Allah than the smell of musk." [Bukhaari]

#### 1.3 The Month of Patience

Ibn `Abdul-Barr (d.464H) – rahimahullah – said:

"What is meant by the month of Patience is the month of Ramadaan So fasting is called patience because it restrains the soul from eating drinking, conjugal relations and sexual desires."

[At-Tamheed of Al Haafidh ibn Abdul Barr]

#### 1.4 The Month of Charity

Ibn `Abaas said, "The Prophet (may Allaah send His blessing and peace upon him) was the most charitable amongst the people, and he used to be more so in the month of Ramadaan when Jibreel used to meet him on every night of Ramadaan till the end of the month..." [Bukhari]

The Prophet (may Allaah send His blessing and peace upon him) said, "He who gives food for a fasting person to break his fast, he will receive the same reward as him, without nothing being reduced from the fasting person's reward." [Tirmidhi]

#### 1.5 The Month of Tarbiyyah

Sufyaan ibn `Abdillaah radhiallahu `anhu said: "O Messenger of Allah, tell me something about Islaam, which I cannot ask anyone else besides you." He said:"Say: 'I believe in Allah' and then be steadfast (upon that)." [Saheeh Muslim (38)]

If the Muslim lives through Ramadaan and spent his days in fasting and his nights in prayer and he accustomed himself to doing acts of good, then he must continue to remain upon this obedience to Allah at all times. This is the true state of the slave, for indeed, the Lord of the months is One and He is ever watchful and witnessing over his servants at all times.

Indeed, steadfastness after Ramadhaan and the rectification of one's statements and actions are the greatest signs that one has gained benefit from the month of Ramadhaan and striven in obedience. They are tokens of reception and signs of success.

Furthermore, the deeds of a servant do not come to an end with the end of a month and the beginning of another, rather they continue and extend until he reaches death. Allah says:

"And worship your Lord until the certainty (death) comes to you." [al-Hijr: 99]

## *2. The Reasons for Fasting*

### *2.1 To Attain Taqwaa*

Fasting has been legislated in order that we may gain taqwaa, as Allah – the Most High – said: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed upon those before you in order that you may attain taqwaa." [Soorah al-Baqarah 2:183]

Talq ibn Habeeb (d. 100H) – rahimahullah – said:

"When fitnah (trial and tribulation) appears then extinguish it with taqwaa." So he was asked as to what taqwaa was, so he replied: "Taqwaa to act in obedience to Allah, upon a light (i.e. eemaan, faith) from Allah, hoping in the Mercy of Allah. And taqwaa is leaving the acts of disobedience to Allah, upon a light from Allah, due to the fear of Allah." [Ibn al-Mubaarak in Kitaab uz-Zuhd and ibn Abee Shaybah in Kitaab ul-Eemaan]

This is one of the best definitions of taqwaa. For every action must have both a starting point and a goal. And an action will not be considered as an act of obedience, or nearness to Allah, unless it starts from pure imaan (faith in Allah). Thus it is pure eemaan – and not habits, desires, nor seeking praise or fame, nor its like – that should be what initiates the action. And the [goal of the] action should be to earn the reward of Allah and to seek His good pleasure." [Risaalatut-Tabookiyyah of Imam ibn al-Qayyim]

So fasting is a means of attaining taqwaa, since it helps prevent from many sins that one is prone to. Due to this, the Prophet sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam said: "Fasting is a shield with which the servant protects himself from the Fire." [Hasan: Ahmad, authenticated by

al-Albaanee in Saheeh ut-Targheeb]

So we should ask ourselves, after each day of fasting: Has this fasting made us more fearful and obedient to Allah? Has it aided us in distancing ourselves from sins and disobedience?

## 2.2 Seeking Nearness to Allah

]The Prophet sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam said:

"Allah said: Whosoever shows enmity to a friend of Mine, I shall be at war with him. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved to Me than the obligatory duties that I have placed upon him. My servant continues to draw nearer to Me with optional deeds so that I shall love him."

[Al-Bukhaari]

The Prophet sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam said:

"Whosoever reaches the month of Ramadaan and does not have his sins forgiven, and so enters the fire, then may Allah distance him." [Saheeh: Ahmad and al-Bayhaqee, authenticated by al-Halabee in Sifat us-Sawmin-Nabee]

Drawing closer to Allah – the Most Perfect – in this blessed month, can be achieved by fulfilling one's obligatory duties; and also reciting the Qur'aan and reflecting upon its meanings, increasing in kindness and in giving charity, in making du`aa (supplication) to Allah, attending the taraweeh Prayer, seeking out Laylatul-Qadr (the Night of Power and Pre-Decree), a night which is better than a thousand months, attending gatherings of knowledge, and striving in those actions that will cause the heart to draw closer to its Lord and to gain His forgiveness. Our level of striving in this blessed month should be greater than our striving to worship Allah in any other month, due to the excellence and rewards that Allah has placed in it. Likewise from the great means of seeking nearness to Allah in this month is making T'ikaf – for whoever is able.

## 2.3 To Acquire Patience

Imaam Ahmad (d.241H) – rahimahullah – said:

"Allah has mentioned sabr (patience) in over ninety places in His Book."

[Related by Ibn al Qayyim in Madaarij us-Saalikeen]

The Prophet sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam said:

"The month of Patience, and the three days of every month, are times for fasting."

[Ahmad and an-Nasaa'ee, authenticated by al-Albaanee in Irwaa al-Ghaleel]

He sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam said:

"O youths! Whoever amongst you is able to marry, then let him do so; for it restrains the eyes and protects the private parts. But whoever is unable, then let him fast, because it will be a shield for him."

[Bukhari and Muslim]

## 2.4 The Cultivation of Good Manners

The Prophet sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam said:

"Whosoever does not abandon falsehood in speech and action, then Allah the Mighty and Majestic has no need that he should leave his food and drink." [Bukhari]

He sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam also said:

"Fasting is not merely abstaining from eating and drinking. Rather, it is also abstaining from ignorant and indecent speech. So if anyone abuses or behaves ignorantly with you, then say: I am fasting, I am fasting." [Saheeh: Ibn Khuzaymah and al-Haakim]

### 2.4 To Attain Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness

Also, Sahl ibn Sa`d said that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

"Indeed there is a gate of Paradise called ar-Rayyaan. On the day of Resurrection those who fast will enter through it; no one enters it except for them, and when they have entered, it is closed so that no one enters it, so when the last of them enters it, it is closed, and whoever enters it drinks, and whoever drinks never becomes thirsty." [Ibn Khuzaimah]

"Fasting is a shield with which a servant protects himself from the Fire." [Ahmad]

On the Day of Judgement, "Fasting will say: O My Lord I prevented him from food and desires so accept my intercession for him." [Ahmad, al-Haakim and Abu Nu'aim, Hasan]

Fasting is a means for one's sins to be forgiven. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "He who fasts Ramadaan, due to Iman and hoping for reward (from Allah) then his past sins are forgiven." [Bukhari, Muslim]

### 2.6 To Teach Children to Worship Allah

It was the practice of the people of Madeenah, that during the fast of `Aashooraa (which is now a recommended fast of one day) to get their children to fast with them: ..... "When the children would cry of hunger and thirst, their parents would distract their attention by giving them some sort of toy to play with....". The children would break their fast with their parents. [Bukhari]

## 3 Actions to Avoid During Ramadhan

### 3.1 Excessive spending:

Ramadaan should be a time to avoid being wasteful, and learning to be prepared in facing harder times by distinguishing the needs from the luxuries. Unfortunately, many people go beyond their limits to spend during Ramadaan. Whether in the varieties of food that they savor each night, or by the other types of spending.

### 3.2 Staying awake during the night and sleeping during the day

Some people sleep during most of the day when they are fasting. Ramadaan is not a time of being lazy, and this do not allow the full benefit from the experience of fasting. It is as if they have only inverted their nights into days and vice versa. In addition, some may spend a great portion of the night indulging in eating and drinking and socializing

### 3.3 Spending more time in socializing

Because people invite each other more often during Ramadaan they do tend to spend more time socializing with friends, and relatives. While it is a good deed to feed the fasting person, this should not result in precious time lost in vain talk. Use the occasion for remembering Allah and offering additional prayers, and for the Da'wah to Allah.

### 3.4 Insisting on performing a certain number of Rakaas for Tarawih

Arguing profusely with the people, sometimes up to the point of not praying behind the Imam, and thus forfeiting the benefit of congregational prayer. This might also bring hatred and disagreement between the Muslims of one community.

### 3.5 Reading Qur'an too fast

Some insist on finishing the whole Qur'an once or more, even if they have to read very fast. Although reading the Qur'an many times is desirable, this should not be done hastily, especially during the Tarawih prayer without pondering upon its meaning. Allah ta'ala said:

"This is a Book which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its verses,"

(Saad38:29),