

THE PURPOSE OF FASTING

In this month of abstention and self sacrifice you may ponder the purpose of fasting. Why do you go hungry, thirsty, and refrain from conjugal relations? What is the purpose of doing all this?

Firstly you need to remember that hunger and thirst are not the end or purpose of fasting, rather fasting is a means to a much greater and noble end: piety and fear of Allah Ta'aala. Allah Ta'aala states **'Fasting is decreed for you, just as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may achieve piety (Taqwa).'** So if we fail to achieve Taqwa from our fasting we will have failed to truly benefit from fasting! The Prophet (saw) said **'there will be many who will achieve nothing from their fasts except hunger.'** (Ibn Majah). Therefore it is crucial that throughout this month we remember the ultimate purpose of our fasts and endeavour to achieve it.

What is Taqwa? Put simply it is the fear of Allah Ta'aala and the obedience of Allah Ta'aala which manifests itself through doing what He commands and refraining from what He prohibits. It is to go through life avoiding the pitfalls of sin. Taqwa can be further understood in the following way; Syeduna Ibn Kaab explained that living a life of Tawqqa was like protecting oneself and one's clothes whilst travelling through a path covered in thorns.

How will fasting help you achieve Taqwa? By fasting you

demonstrate to yourself that on Allah Ta'aala's command you have the determination and resolve to give up food, drink and conjugal relations during daylight. Even though you have ample opportunities to slip away from the world's eye and eat and drink secretly you believe and are aware of Allah Ta'aala so much that you don't even dare! So if you can go the whole month giving up lawful items just on His command then you can also give up unlawful acts from the rest of your life - acts which are ultimately harmful to your present and future.

Fasting is also Character building. During fasting we especially refrain from evil habits such as lying, backbiting and slandering (we should not do this anyway). This is because fasting should cover the whole body. The Prophet (saw) warned **'If the fasting person does not give up lying and evil then Allah Ta'aala has no need for his giving up of food and drink.'** (Nisai) The eyes should refrain from looking at blameworthy and disapproved things. The tongue should not rant, rave, lie, backbite or wrangle. The ears should not listen to anything reprehensible. The hand and foot should not be used for evil acts.

When a person sincerely refrains from sin for a whole month undoubtedly his character, disposition and bodily habits will have been transformed. He will always be in the remembrance of his Lord and sins, rather than being habitual, will seem strange.

Ramadhaan

A BLESSED MONTH!

Abu Huraira narrates 'The Messenger (saw) said "Ramadhaan has come to you, a blessed month. Allah Ta'aala has prescribed it's fasts for you, the gates of heaven are opened and the gates of hell are closed and the rebellious devils are chained. In it is a night better than a thousand months, whoever is deprived of its goodness is indeed deprived' (Nisai)

Abu Huraira reports that the Blessed Prophet (saw) said 'All the good deeds of the son of Adam (as) are increased from ten to seven hundred times except for fasting. Allah Ta'aala says 'It is for Me and I alone will reward it as I wish for the person has given up his food and passions for My pleasure. There are two joys for the fasting person, a joy at the time of breaking the fast and a joy at the time he will meet his Lord. For his Lord the odour of his mouth is better than the fragrance of musk.' (Muslim)

The Blessed Messenger (saw) said 'The Qur'an and the fast will intercede for the worshipper on the Day of Judgement. The fast will plead 'O Lord, I stopped him from food and relations throughout the day so accept my intercession for him' (And) the Qur'an will plead 'I stopped him from sleeping at night so accept my intercession for him' The Blessed Prophet (saw) said 'Their intercession will be accepted.' (Ahmad)

The Prophet (saw) explained 'On the Day of Judgement when Allah Ta'aala will judge the deeds of a slave his crimes will be compensated by his good deeds until all his good deeds are exhausted except fasts, (then) Allah Ta'aala will forgive the remainder of his crimes and take him to paradise because of fasting.' (Bayhaqi)

This month and it's fast are very important **DO NOT MISS OUT - YOU WILL REGRET IT FOR ETERNITY.** The Prophet (saw) explained **'Whoever misses a single fast of Ramadhaan without excuse will never be able to make it up even if he fasted for eternity'** (Tirmidhi)

Battle of Badr

The 17th of Ramadhan marks the first major battle between Muslims and the Disbelievers. After the Muslims were forced to leave Makkah the Prophet (saw) and his companions found sanctuary amongst the believers in Madeenah. On his arrival the Muslims of Madeenah lined the streets and rejoiced. In Madeenah the Muslims were at peace with the Jewish and other communities. This peace allowed the Muslims to establish themselves. The Disbelievers of Makkah, who had earlier driven out the Muslims, found this intolerable and saw this budding community as a slur on their honour which needed to be extinguished. They began to extend their oppression upon the Muslims and skirmishes between small groups of Muslims and disbelievers of Makkah broke out in the plains outside Madeenah. It was against this background that in the second year of Hijrah a major trade convoy of the Disbelievers was passing by Madeenah. Fearing it may be caught up in these skirmishes the Disbelievers gathered a mighty army of 1,000 of the most battle hardened and evil men and set forth towards Madeenah. However, as this army advanced it received news that the trade convoy had safely passed and the army should return home. Abu Jahl who was one of the leaders in the army proclaimed that a grand army had been assembled and would not go home quietly. He wanted to show the whole of Arabia just how powerful it was and suggested they proceeded towards Madeenah and camp outside for three days as a victory parade and celebration.

In the meantime, due to the frequent skirmishes, a small Muslim expedition had already left Madeenah. It had not come in preparation of a major battle. As they reached the valley of Badr, measuring 5 miles by 4, the Muslims became aware of the size of the Kuffaar army heading towards them and seeing who it was led by realised that a battle was imminent especially once the Kuffaar saw the small size of the Muslim contingent. The Muslims began defensive preparations. That night the Prophet (saw) bowed into prostration and pleaded with His Lord that if this small Muslim group was defeated then Islam would be finished. On that night he also inspected the valley and marked out for the companions the very spots where the leaders of the Kuffaar would be killed.

The relative size of the two armies reveals that the battle should not have even been a contest! The Kuffaar army had 950 men, 200 horses and many camels whilst the Muslim army was made up of 313 men, 2 horses and 70 camels. However the Muslims had faith in Allah Ta'ala and boundless love and respect for the Prophet (saw). This inequity in numbers and equipment did not concern them! The battle began with the customary one to one battles and then the full scale battle. The commitment and fervour of the Muslims proved too much for the Kuffaar, especially as the Muslims made a point of attacking the leaders of the Kuffaar. On seeing their leaders killed the Kuffaar lost heart. The battle finally ended when the Prophet (saw), on Allah's command, threw pebbles at the kuffaar. These pebbles caused panic amongst the Kuffaar who fled. Only 14 Muslims were martyred (6 Muhaajir and 8 Ansaar) whilst 70 Kuffaar were killed and the same number taken prisoner. Only two prisoners were executed due to their past crimes and the rest were later freed.

The Prophet (saw) stayed at Badr for three days after the battle. He stood over the graves of the disbelievers and addressed them 'Did my Lord not fulfil His promise to me?' Onlookers enquired why he was addressing the dead, he replied 'You are not able to hear more than they can!' (Bukhaari)

The Battle of Badr was both a great victory on and off the battle field. The whole of Arabia now knew that the Muslims were a force to be taken seriously. It also served as a warning to the enemies in Madeenah who were secretly plotting against them. The victory gave the fledgling Muslim community great confidence. The Muslims had little choice but to fight: had they let the army sit outside the city and return unopposed it would have been seen as a sign of weakness and the enemies of Islam would have been bouyed and would have sooner or later attacked the Muslims.

The Prophet's Ramadhaan

GOOD NEWS

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SEHRI & IFTAAR

Don't miss them!

The period of Fasting runs from daybreak to sunset. Muslims wake up prior to Daybreak for a pre-dawn meal known as Suhoor or Sehri. However many Muslims have begun to skip this meal in order to get extra sleep. This is NOT recommended for both health and religious reasons. The Suhoor is part of the Signs of our religion and not only provides vital nourishment but is a source of Blessings. The Prophet (saw) said '**The difference between our Fasting and that of the people of the Book is the pre-dawn meal.**' He also ordered '**Eat the pre-dawn meal since it has blessing**' He further reinforced this in another hadith '**None of you should leave it (the pre dawn meal) even if it is a sip of water because Allah and His angels send blessings on those who take the Suhoor**' (Ahmad). He also said '**Seek the help of the Sehri in your day's fast.**' (Ibn Majah)

The food taken at the opening of the fast is known as Iftaar (the opening) and this year the fasts will open when people are in work places etc. Some may be tempted to delay the opening of the fast. This again is not approved and must be avoided. The Prophet (saw) said

- * **The people will remain good as long as they are early in the Iftaar.**
- * **My Ummah will stay on the Sunnah whilst it does not wait for the stars in its Iftaar.**
- * **Allah states that the most beloved of my people is the one who is quick in his Iftaar.**
- * **This deen will remain strong whilst people perform Iftaar early because the Jews and Christians used to delay it.**

FAST RULES

Who must Fast:

Fasting is obligatory upon every sane Muslim male and female who is of age and health and is not travelling.

Matters when one does not need to fast:

Travel, Pregnancy, Breastfeeding, Menstruation, Post natal bleeding, Illness, Old age, Fear of death or insanity, Jihaad.

Matters which break the fast:

It is useful to classify these into two:

- 1) *Those which only require the fast to be made up.*
- 2) *Those which also necessitate compensation.*

Only make the fast up:

Eating in the morning believing that daybreak has not occurred but actually had.

Intentional eating or drinking of something which is not normally

eaten e.g soil, stones, grass.
Swallowing tears and sweat
Putting Oil into the ear

Those which also require compensation:

Eating or drinking items which are normally eaten
Intercourse
Taking medicine

What is compensation

Free a slave or fast 60 continuous days or feed 60 poor people two meals.

Matters which do not break the fast:

Any actions taken through forgetfulness
Involuntary vomiting - but if you vomit intentionally an amount equal to a full mouthful then the fast is broken
Inhaling smoke involuntarily e.g smoke from a fire or dust in the wind - but intentional inhalation such as smoking breaks the fast.
Kissing someone.
Putting water into the

ears.
The natural swallowing of a very minor item which was stuck between the teeth.
Bleeding from the teeth as long as it does not reach the throat

Non Fasting people who need to spend the day as if they are fasting:

- * A traveller who was travelling but reached his destination during the day must spend the rest of the day as if he is fasting
- * A menstruating woman who becomes clean during the day must spend the rest of the day as if she was fasting.
- * A person who was ill but becomes better during the day.
- * A disbeliever who becomes a Muslim during the day.
- * Mistakenly opening the fast thinking the sun had set.
- * If one breaks the fast one intentionally.

If you have any questions or want more detailed rules see www.trueislam.org.uk

Ramadhān is a month of giving and there are few causes better to support than the various educational projects of Hazrat Sultan Bahu Trust. Alongside providing welfare for the poor and needy it ensures that the poor, especially their children, are provided with first class education. This will enable the poor to become independent and break the dependency cycle. Some of the current projects are:

The Hazrat Sultan Bahu International University, at Darbaar Hazrat Sultan Bahu in Jhang (Pakistan) is in its construction stage. Its first phase has been completed. This will ensure that poor children from all over the Sub continent can achieve Graduate level education.

Al Hira Academy at the Darbaar provides education for orphaned and destitute students. It currently has 350 students.
Holy College and Science Academy (Lahore) - provides education from Matric to M.A. in both Science and Arts.

Al Hira Community College (Mirpur) for Girls - provides female students with a complete 4 year Dars e Nizaami (Religious Scholar) course. It also provides modern subjects of Science and IT - up to BA level - in a wholly Islamic environment.

Jamia Al Hira at Darbaar Hazrat Sultan Bahu (Jahng) - provides Dars e Nizaami and Hifz. In addition to the above English Medium Schools are established in Kerura, Chakwaal, Panyaala, Sahiwaal and Lahore.

All these institutes provide free education to poor and orphaned children - Hazrat Sultan Bahu Trust is only able to do this through the generous support of Muslims around the world. If anyone is travelling to Pakistan please do visit any of these institutions and witness the work for yourself. To add your support or for further information contact 0121 440 4096.

TARAAVEEH

The Blessed Prophet (saw) said, "(Ramadhaan is) a month in which Allah (swt) has prescribed for you fasting and I have prescribed for you the night vigil (prayer of Taraaveeh). Whoever fasts and stays up at night with conviction and sincerity his sins will disappear and leave him clean as the day he was born." (Ibn Maajah)

One of the specialities of this month is the nightly Taraaveeh gathering. It takes place after the Isha prayer and before the Witr. The Taraaveeh consists of 20 rakahs split into 10 units of 2 rakahs. After each four rakahs there is a little rest in which Tasbeehaat are recited. The Taraaveeh is a collective obligation, so in each locality Taraaveeh must take place. If it does not then all those in the locality are sinful.

The practice of Taraaveeh dates back to the time of the Prophet (saw). Ibn Abbaas narrates **'In Ramadhaan the Prophet (saw) would pray twenty Rakahs, exclusive of Witr'** (Ibn Shayba, Tibraani, Bayhaqi)

The Rightly guided Caliphs, especially Umar ul Farooq, continued and consolidated this practice: Saab bin Yazeed states **'In the time of Umar we would pray 20 rakahs and witr'** (Bayhaqi & Fath ul Baari) (Fath ul Baari includes the extra words of 'in Ramadhaan'). Yazeed bin Romaan narrates **'People in the time of Umar bin Khattaab would pray 23 rakahs in Ramadhaan'** (Muwaata Imam Malik, Sunan Bayhaqi). Twenty were Taraaveeh and three were Witr. Abdur Rahmaan AsSalama narrates **'Ali summoned all the Qaaris in Ramadhan and ordered one of them to lead the people in 20 rakahs and Ali himself led the Witr'** (Babyaqi, Minbaaj us Sunna of Ibn Taymiyya).

* Taraaveeh needs to follow Isha so a person cannot pray Taraaveeh before praying Isha. A person who arrives in a Mosque when Taraaveeh has begun must first pray Isha and then the Taraaveeh.

* Only after Taraaveeh can Witr be prayed in Jamaat. If a person was not in the Taraaveeh at all he cannot pray Witr with Jamaat. Witr with Jamaat is specific to the Taraaveeh prayer.

* If somebody arrives late for Taraaveeh and misses some rakahs he can either make them up before or after Witr.

* As Taraaveeh is Sunnah upon individuals there is no Qadhaa. If a person misses Taraaveeh he cannot make it up the next day.

SYEDUNA ALI

The Gateway to Knowledge

The 21st of Ramadhan is the anniversary of the martyrdom of the fourth Caliph of Islam, Syeduna Ali karam Allahu wajhul kareem. He was the younger first cousin of the Prophet (saw) and one of the first people to accept Islam. He was always at the Prophet's side during the persecution and abuse in Makkah and in fact slept in the Prophet's bed on the night the Mushrikeen came to murder the Prophet (saw). His strength and bravery was legendary, his most famous conquest was when he single handedly ripped the door of the fortress at Khaybar. The Prophet (saw) loved Ali a great deal, he once said to him 'Your blood is my blood and your flesh is my flesh'. The Prophet (saw) ordered the Muslims to love and respect Ali, he said 'Whoever has me as a Leader, has Ali as a Leader'. Ali was well known for his knowledge, the Prophet (saw) confirmed 'I am the City of knowledge and Ali is its gateway'. To sample his wisdom and insight we present some extracts from the wasiyah (will) Ali, as he was about to pass away, gave to his son, Imam Hassan.

Son, make yourself an example for others. Like for them what you like for yourself and dislike for them which you dislike for yourself. Just as you would not like others to oppress you, you should not oppress others. Show others the same kindness you expect from them. Self praise is folly and destructive for your character so complete your journey with economy.

Son, take care that greed does not turn you blind and that enmity does not make you lose your mind. Do not make the friends enemy your friend or the friend will also become an enemy. Keep advising your friend whether he likes it or not. Drink your Anger; I have not found a cup more sweeter than anger. There are two types of Rizq (means of livelihood), one which you seek yourself and endeavour for and another which itself searches for you! So if you stop seeking it it will come running to you! The seed conforms with basic instruction whilst a four legged animal only obeys after beating.

How many of your own are more estranged than strangers and how many strangers are more closer than your own? The foreigner is he who has no friends. Whoever relies upon the world, the world betrays him. When rulers change, times also change. Before a journey inspect your travelling partners and before settling inspect your neighbours. Whoever leaves the path of truth his path becomes narrow. Whoever maintains his position maintains his respect. The strongest relationship is the one between the human and His Lord.

**THIS NEWSLETTER WAS WRITTEN BY MOHAMMED SAJID
WHO CAN BE CONTACTED VIA:
THE NEWSLETTER PAGE ON: WWW.TRUEISLAM.ORG.UK
OR EMAIL: SHAHWAAR@HOTMAIL.COM
OR SMS: 07983 130359**