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### A COMPREHENSIVE PRAYER

In the Holy Qur'an Almighty Allah ordains the obligatory requirement of fasting and mentions the blessings of the month of Ramadhan. In the same verses Almighty Allah also gives a glad tiding of His nearness to His sincere servants by saying:

*I accept the supplication of him who prays to Me and I respond to him.*

Almighty Allah is forever All Hearing and He is the One Who Always Responds to Prayers. But the subject of acceptance of prayers, when mentioned along with the month of Ramadhan and the act of fasting, creates a special subject, and sheds light upon the special acceptance of prayers during fasting.

It is also important to remember that Almighty Allah has specifically addressed the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him);

*When My servants ask thee concerning me, tell them that I am near; I respond to the cry of the Crier when he calls upon Me.*

In other words, we have been asked to take the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as our intercessor. His blessed personality and every moment of his life was a witness that he had a living and perfect relationship with Almighty Allah and Allah always accepts his prayers. It was

the blessing of his prayers that those who had spiritually died for ages were quickened to life. Those that were spiritually deaf and dumb started uttering words of divine wisdom. We are being taught that if we want that our prayers be granted acceptance and that Almighty Allah grace our cries and shower His grace and light upon us, it is essential that we learn the ways from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). His obedience will make our prayers worthy of acceptance with The Almighty Allah. Our prayer will be granted the ability to soar high. It will be accepted by the Gracious and Compassionate Lord and will bring about a reformation to us both in this world and Hereafter.

There is abundant mention of the prayers of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the books of Hadith. We hope that our readers must be memorizing many of them and benefiting from them. But at this time we wish to bring a special aspect of the blessings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). His kindness knows no bounds; it is not possible for anyone to comprehend it. Please note how the compassion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) shows mercy to those, who despite their efforts, cannot memorize all those prayers.

Hadhrat Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to make prayers abundantly; it is not possible for us to memorize all of them. Once we asked the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "O Prophet of Allah, you have made so many prayers; we cannot remember them all." The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Should I teach you a prayer which comprehends them all? You should pray:

*O Allah, I beg from Thee of all the good things that Thy Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) begged of Thee and seek Thy protection from everything that Thy Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), sought protection. You are the One from Whom protection is sought, and Thou Alone can bring all things to completion. And none is capable of doing any good or forbidding any harm except through the help of Allah, the High and the Great.*

Subhan Allah! How great are the favors that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him) has bestowed upon us. How vast is his compassion for his ummah! What a comprehensive prayer he has taught us.

*Bless O Allah! Muhammad and his progeny in like proportion to the pain and concern that he suffered for this ummah.*

As the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) says:

All Messengers are Holy; one better than the other

But I declare in the name of Allah the Great, that the best of all creation is he alone - The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

The earlier ones left in the way; he took us to the final destination;

May I be sacrificed in his way; he alone is the perfect guide

I am totally devoted to that light, I belong entirely to him

He is everything; I am nothing. This is the ultimate decision.

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## FROM THE HOLY QURAN

"O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous.

"The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but whoso among you is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation—the feeding of a poor man. And whoso performs a good work with willing obedience, it is better for him. And fasting is good for you, if you only knew.

"The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Quran was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein. But whoso is sick or is on a journey, shall fast the same number of other days. Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful.

"And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way.

"It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fast. They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them. Allah knows that you have been acting unjustly to yourselves, wherefore He has turned to you with mercy and afforded you relief. So you may now go in unto them and seek what Allah has ordained for you; and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then complete the fast till nightfall and do not go in unto them while you remain in the mosques for devotion. These are the limits fixed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus does Allah make His commandments clear to men that they may become secure against evil." (2:184-188).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
 كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ  
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ۞ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا  
 أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ  
 يُحِبُّونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا  
 فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ  
 تَعْلَمُونَ ۞ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ  
 هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن  
 شَهِدَ مِنكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى  
 سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا  
 يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى  
 مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ۞ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي  
 عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ  
 فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ۞ أَحَلَّ  
 لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ  
 وَأَنتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ  
 فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنكُمْ فَالَّذِينَ بَاشَرُوا هُنَّ  
 وَأَبْتَعُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكَلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَسْبِقَ  
 لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ  
 ثُمَّ أَتُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوا هُنَّ وَأَنتُمْ  
 عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا  
 كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ۞

## SO SAID THE HOLY PROPHET (PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAH BE UPON HIM)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) said: Allah the Honored and Lofty says: All tasks of the son of Adam are for himself but the fast is for Me and I am Myself the reward for it. So anyone of you who is fasting should not indulge in loose talk nor should he make noise or mischief. If someone quarrels with him, he should say: "I am fasting." I tell you in the name of Him who controls the life of Muhammad (s.a.w.), the odor from the mouth of a person who is fasting is purer and more fragrant to Allah than the smell of musk. When a person fasts, he receives two occasions of joy: (1) when he opens his fast, and (2) when he meets his Lord.

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (Allah be pleased with

him) narrates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) said: He who does not refrain from telling lies and acting upon falsehood, Allah does not need for him to remain hungry or thirsty.

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) said: When the month of Ramadhan comes, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and Satans are locked up.

Hadhrat Anas (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) said: Take the *Sehri* (the meal to start the fast) because starting the fast with *Sehri* is full of blessings.

### *From the Writings of the Promised Messiah:*

#### THE PURPOSE OF FASTING IS PURIFICATION

I have already spoken of the *Salat*. Next in order is worship in the form of fasting. It is a pity that some who call themselves Muslims at this time desire to modify these forms of worship. They are blind and are not aware of the perfect wisdom of God Almighty. These forms of worship are essential for the purification of the spirit. These people seek to intervene absurdly in a sphere of which they have no knowledge and devise false schemes for the improvement of a territory that they have not visited. Their lives are devoted to worldly affairs; of spiritual matters they have no notion.

To be moderate in eating and drinking and to bear hunger and thirst are necessary for the purification of the spirit and promote the capacity for visions. Man does not live by bread alone. To discard all thought of eternal life is to invite

Divine wrath. But it should be remembered that the fast does not mean merely that a person should abstain from food and drink over a certain period. During the fast one should be occupied greatly with the remembrance of God. The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, occupied himself greatly with worship during the month of Ramadhan. During that month one should discard one's preoccupation with eating and drinking and cutting asunder from these needs should address oneself wholly towards God.

Unfortunate is the person who is bestowed material bread and pays no attention to spiritual bread. Material bread strengthens the body, and spiritual bread sustains the soul and sharpens the spiritual faculties. Seek the grace of God, as all doors are opened by His grace. (Malfoozat, Vol. 9, p. 123)

## A MONTH OF GREAT BLESSINGS IS ABOUT TO START

Almighty Allah has declared Ramazan-ul-Mubarak a very important and blessed month. The revelation of the Holy Quran started in this month. Allah says:

*“The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Quran was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein. But whoso is sick or is on a journey, shall fast the same number of other days. Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful.”* (2:186).

This is the same blessed month in which the Holy Prophet (saw) used to pray in the cave of Hira before he was commissioned to be a Prophet. In this reference *Ibn-e-Ishaq* narrates that every year the Holy Prophet (saw) used to stay in the cave of Hira for worship in the month of Ramazan, until one year when he had gone there as usual for worship, Hazrat Gibrael (Archangel Gabriel) descended on him and he received the first revelation. (*Al Seerah-tul-Nabawiyyah*). That is how the revelation of Quran began in this blessed month and the foundation of religion of Islam was laid.

According to the Islamic calendar, the month of *Shabaan* precedes the month of *Ramazan*. Hazrat Salman Farsi narrates that on the last night of *Shabaan* the Holy Prophet addressed us and said:

“O people! a month of great glory and prestige is about to dawn on you. Yes a month of blessings in which comes a night which is better than a thousand months. Almighty Allah has made fasting obligatory during day time and worship at nights as *Nafl*.”

He (the Holy Prophet) said, “this month is the month of patience and reward for this patience is Heaven. This is the month of compassion.”

He also said “This is such a month in which the

livelihood of the believers is increased. (*Mishkat al Masaabeeh, First Volume, The Book of Fasting, third chapter.*)

The Holy Prophet (saw) had described the greatness of this month on different occasions and had established the significance and importance of this month in the hearts of people. Out of these sayings some are mentioned here,

1. “This is the month, the beginning of which is blessings and the middle of which is forgiveness and the end of which is a time for perfect reward, *i.e.*, deliverance from hell.” (*Mishkat al Masaabeeh, First Volume, The Book of Fasting, third chapter.*)

2. “This is the month in which any person who wakes up in the nights of *Ramazan* with the intention of seeking pleasure of Allah and to fulfill the requirement of faith, all the previous sins of that person are forgiven.” (*Bukhari, Book of Fasting*)

3. “In this month any one who worships with sincerity and seeking pleasure of Allah, such a one is cleansed free of sins as one was the day one was born.” (*Nisai, Book of Fasting*)

4. “This is the month in which the doors of heaven are opened and the doors of hell are closed and Satan is chained.” (*Bukhari, Book of Fasting*)

5. “This is the month in which a caller calls out that O! who is desirous of good, come and move forward and O! who is desirous of evil, stop! And a lot of people are delivered from fire for the sake of Allah and it so happens in every night of *Ramazan*.” (*Ibn-e-Maja, Book of Fasting*)

6. The Holy Prophet (saw) has declared this month the gateway of worship. He said, “For everything is a gateway and *Ramazan* is gateway of worship” (*Al-Jaame-al-Munir fee Ahadeeth al Nazeer, Part one, hadeeth #2415*)

7. This is the blessed month in which the Archangel Gabriel used to complete the recitation of the Holy Quran with the Holy Prophet (saw) and in the last *Ramazan* before the demise of the Holy Prophet (saw)

he completed it twice.

8. The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "The almsgiving during this month is the best of all almsgiving." (*Sunan Al Tirmizi*)

9. "Anyone who lightens the burden of one's servant and lessens the workload in this month, Almighty Allah will forgive such a person and will deliver him from fire." (*Mishkat al Masaabeeh, First Volume, The Book of Fasting, third chapter.*)

10. "Anyone who does not quit lying and committing wrong deeds during fasting, Allah does not care for such person's giving up eating and drinking." (*Bukhari, Book of Fasting*)

11: On another occasion he said, "Fasting does not mean just quit eating and drinking, rather, giving up all loose talk and stopping from utterance of obscenities is also included in it. Therefore, those who keep fast should be aware that if anyone abuses you or angers you, you just tell him that I am fasting." (*Bukhari, Book of Fasting*)

If anyone indulges in loose and obscene talk while fasting then his fast would be nothing more than staying hungry and thirsty and would not achieve any reward.

Therefore if one does not take care of these requirements and etiquette of fasting then such a person is not going to get any benefit from it. Fasting is a kind of worship which is done by following and fulfilling all the conditions. A lot of unfortunate people lose the best of the rewards of this worship by not paying proper attention to these conditions.

Hazrat *Abu Huraira* narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "There are a lot of people who do not gain anything except hunger and thirst by fasting and there are many who wake up at night to say prayers but do not gain anything except sleeplessness." (*Ibn-e-Maja, Book of Fasting*)

Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s.) said, "One who keeps fast should be careful that fasting does not only mean that one should stay hungry but should constantly remember Allah while fasting."

Then he said, "This month is better than the rest of the months." (*Speeches At Annual Convention 1906, pp. 20-21*)

This is such an important month that safety and blessings for the rest of the year depend upon completing this month safely (while fulfilling all the conditions).

The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "If *Ramazan* is passed safely then be rest assured that the rest of the year will be safe." (*Al Jaame-al-Sagheer, Part One, Hadeeth # 675*)

One should be very careful about maintaining the proper honor and observing the etiquettes of the blessed and sacred month of *Ramazan* so that from physical, spiritual, moral, and every other aspect, the rest of the year should become a source of peace and blessings and this month should become an expiation for sins and weaknesses for the rest of the year.

Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s.), while describing the importance and significance of the month of *Ramazan*, said, "The importance of the month of *Ramazan* is evident from the verse of Holy Quran, "*Shahro Ramazan allazi Unzela fee-hil Quran*" (2:186). The divines have written that for enlightenment of the soul this is a very important month. Frequent revelations are received during this month. *Salat* (prayer) results in *Tazkia-e-Nafs* and *Saum* (Fasting) results in *Tajjalli-e-Qalb*.

*Tazkia-e-Nafs* means that one becomes distant from evils of *Nafs-e-Ammara* (a soul inclined towards evil), and *Tajjalli-e-Qalb* means that the door of revelation is opened so that one attains communion with Allah and witnesses Him." (*Malfoozat, Volume 4, p. 256*)

If someone is so unfortunate that in addition to the fasts in *Ramazan* he is also deprived of other prayers and blessings of this month then he should say the following prayer as described by Hazrat Promised Messiah (as).

"O Allah! this is your blessed month and I am missing the benefit from its blessings and I do not know whether I shall be alive next year or not or I would be able to complete the fasts that I am unable to keep now."

The Promised Messiah added: If he seeks the power and strength from Allah then I am certain that Allah will bestow strength on such a soul. (*Malfoozat, Volume 4, p. 288*)

## ISLAMIC INJUNCTIONS ABOUT FASTING

by Abdul Majid Tahir  
(Translated from Alfazl International)

### Who is Obligated to Fast?

Fasting is obligatory for every adult, fit, healthy, stationed (not traveling) Muslim man and woman. Traveler and sick is given the concession to make up for lost fasts in other days. Those who have chronic illness who are unlikely to regain health or someone who is so weak and incapacitated that it is unlikely for him to make up for these fasts even in other days should pay *Fidya*. Similarly pregnant women and nursing mothers should also pay *Fidya*.

### Age of Fasting

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (Allah be pleased with him) writes, "There are quite a few who force young children to keep fast. One must realize that for every obligatory worship there are separate prescribed limits and times. In my view certain injunctions start at age 4 and certain others which start between ages 7 to 12 and some start at ages 15 to 17. I am of the opinion that fasting becomes obligatory at age 15 to 18 and this is also the age of maturity. From age 15 one should start keeping fast and at age 18 it becomes obligatory. I remember that when we were young we were also fond of keeping fasts but Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s.) would not allow us to keep fast. Instead of persuading us to keep fast, he used to prohibit us from fasting. So in order to maintain the health of children and to enhance their strength they should be kept from fasting. When they attain their strength and reach age 15 they should be gradually asked to fast. Allow them to keep as many fasts in the first year as they want, increase the number in the second year and few more the third year. In this way they gradually develop the practice of fasting." (*Al-Fazal*, 11 April, 1925)

### Traveler and Sick Should not Fast

Almighty Allah enjoins in The Holy Quran, "whoso among you is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation - the feeding of a poor man." (2:185)

Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s.) was asked about

fasting during travel. He replied, "From the Holy Quran it is evident that those who are sick or are traveling should not fast, and this is an injunction. Allah has not said that you are given an option not to fast. In my opinion, a traveler should not fast. Many people keep fast as a routine, there is nothing wrong with it. But still one should be careful about the injunction "make up for these fasts in other days". It is as if, one who keeps fast during travel while enduring hardships, is trying to appease Allah by a show of his strength. He does not seek pleasure of Allah by obedience. Such a person is misled. True faith requires obedience of commandments and prohibitions of Allah." (*Al Hakam*, January 26, 1899)

On another occasion, the Promised Messiah (a.s.) said, "If one is traveling by train and there is no hardship then one can fast, otherwise he should take advantage of God's permission." (*Al Hakam*, December 24, 1900)

The Promised Messiah (a.s.) said, "If someone fasts in the month of *Ramazan* while traveling or being sick, such a person is being disobedient of a clear commandment of Allah. Almighty Allah has clearly revealed that the traveler and sick should not fast. One should fast after recovering from illness and finishing the journey. One should obey this command of Allah as deliverance is by grace of Allah and one can not attain deliverance on the strength of his deeds. Allah did not reveal that sickness should be mild or severe or journey should be short or long. Instead, this injunction is all encompassing and one should follow it. If a sick person or a traveler fasts then he must be decreed as disobedient." (*Al Badr*, October 17, 1907)

"There are certain illnesses in which the sick continues with his/her daily chores. Such a person is not considered sick. Similarly, if one travels routinely because of his/her occupation then he/she can not be considered as a traveler. There are certain illnesses in which a person keeps on performing routine duties. For example, if some soldiers develop diarrhea for few days, they don't quit working for ever. Therefore, if one can find time and strength to engage

in other activities, why can such a person not fast? These excuses are used by people because in reality they are against fasting. No doubt this is a Quranic injunction that during travel and while sick, one should not fast and we insist on this so that we should not be disrespectful to Quranic command. But if someone uses this injunction as an excuse for not fasting while he can fast, or if some fasts are missed and if they had tried hard enough they might have been able to keep those fasts, then they are just as guilty as one who does not keep fast even without any reason. Therefore, every Ahmadi who did not fast because of negligence or without any valid reason, should make up later" (*Al Fazal, August 16, 1948*).

Therefore, anyone who travels in the course of his duty, for example, railway guard, driver, pilot, travel agent, would be considered as stationed and would fast.

### Chronic Patients and Travelers

When asked about chronically ill and the traveler, the Promised Messiah (a.s.) replied, "Those sick people and travelers who do not think that they will get another chance to fast, for example, an old weak person or a weak pregnant woman who thinks that after delivery she would be incapacitated because of suckling and the whole year will pass, such persons are allowed not to fast because they cannot fast. They should pay *Fidya* (expiation). Only *Fidya* is allowed for extremely old person or someone who would never have the strength to fast. But for the rest it is not allowed that just by paying *Fidya* only they would be excused from fasting. To allow only *Fidya* to those people who regain strength to fast after recovering from illness, would mean opening the door of mischief. The religion in which there is no striving is not worth anything. Likewise, to remove the obligations set by Allah, is a grievous sin. Allah says in the Holy Quran that only those people are given guidance who strive in our way." (*Fatawa Ahmadiyya, p 183*)

### Travel & Fasting

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II states, "Although some religious jurists may differ, my opinion and belief regarding travel is that the journey that starts after *Sehri* and finishes before sunset should not be considered as journey as far as fasting is concerned.

Sharia prohibits from fasting during travel not traveling during fast." (*Al Fazal, December 25, 1942*)

There could be 4 possibilities regarding fasting during travel:

If travel is in progress, on foot or on any mode of transportation, then one should not fast.

1. If one is going to stay overnight and the entire next day and facilities are available then its optional to fast.
2. If travel is to start after *Sehri* and there is a possibility of returning home before *Aftaari* then it is permissible to fast or not to fast.
3. If during travel there is going to be a stay for 15 days or more then one should make arrangement for *Sehri* and fast.

### Definition of Travel

In this regard the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) said, "It is my belief that one should not create too many hardships for himself. Whatever is commonly known as travel even if it involves only few miles, during such travel one should follow the injunctions specified for travel. *Inna Mal Aamaal-o-Bin Niyyat*. i.e., deeds are judged by intentions. Some times we go for a walk for 2-3 miles with our friends and nobody considers it as travel. But when somebody packs up luggage and set out with the intention of travel then such a person is considered as traveler. Sharia is not based on hardship. Whatever is commonly conceived as travel is travel concerning religion. One should follow the leaves granted by Allah as one follows the commandments. Commandments are from Allah as are the allowances." (*Al Hakam, Volume 5, February 17, 1901, p13*)

Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s) wrote to Hazrat Sahibzada Pir Siraj-ul-Haq (raa) in a letter, "*man kana minkum mareezen au alaa safarin fa iddatun min ayyamin ukhar*, that is, "if you are sick or on journey (short or long) then fast same number of days at other time". Allah has not set any limit for the journey neither one finds any limit in Ahadeeth. Rather, whatever distance is ordinarily called journey should be considered as journey. Any distance which is less than that can not be called journey." (*Maktoobat, Volume 5, p. 81*)



## Laborer and Fast

Some laborers find it difficult to fast while doing manual labor. Are they allowed not to fast on this basis? The Holy Quran has not mentioned any exception about this, neither do we find any mention of this in Ahadeeth, although people used to perform manual labor even in those days. Of course if someone is very weak and fasting is unbearable, then such a person should be considered as sick and fasting is not allowed in sickness.

When this question was presented before Hazrat Promised Messiah (peace be on him) that some times Ramazan falls in such a weather that farmers have to perform hard manual labor like sowing the seeds or harvesting the crop and it becomes impossible for them to fast. What should they do? Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s.) replied, "*Inna mal Aamaal-o-Bin Niyyat.*" (actions are judged according to intention). These people keep their condition secret. Everyone should evaluate his/her condition with piety and fear of God. One should hire a laborer if one can afford, otherwise such a person is to be regarded as sick and should fast when situation eases up." (*Al Badr, September 26, 1907*)

## Women And Fasting

A woman having periods is not allowed to fast. In this regard Hazrat Ayesha (raa) narrates that when we did not fast during the time of our periods, the Holy Prophet (saw) told us to fast in other days. (*Ibn-e-Maja*)

The same injunction applies to women after delivering a baby. But once they are clean, they must make up for these lost fasts.

It is narrated in hadith, regarding nursing mothers and pregnant woman, "The Holy Prophet (saw) said that Allah has forgiven half of *Salat* (prayer) for the traveler, and a nursing mother and a pregnant woman is given leave from fasting." (*Tirmizi*)

Hazrat Anas (raa) narrates, "The Holy Prophet (saw) has given leave to pregnant women and nursing mothers from fasting." (*Ibn-e-Maja*) It means that these woman should complete the number of fasts after their condition has changed (i.e., they are no longer pregnant or nursing mothers). They should also pay *Fidya* if they have the capacity, otherwise making up for the lost fasts should suffice as

expiation.

If a woman is continuously facing a situation in which she is either pregnant or nursing mother then she does not have to fast and paying *Fidya* is enough. Same is the case of one who is extremely old or chronically ill and it is not possible to fast from the point of view health then it suffices for such a person to pay *Fidya* only.

## Student & Fasting

A student who is preparing for examination should consider the following regarding fasting. We are not allowed to quit routine activities. If fasting becomes unbearable for one because of routine daily activities then such person is to be considered sick. But in such a case such person is totally responsible for his decision and Allah will treat such person according to his motives and condition. In other words a person is him or herself the judge in deciding about his or her personal situation.

If someone becomes ill by fasting then such a person is excused from fasting. And if such a person is always in such condition then fasting never becomes obligatory. If the weather is contributing to his/her illness then fasts should be kept when weather changes. However, one should be very cautious and fear Allah before making this decision that it be a true reason and not just an excuse. (*Al Fazal, May 22, 1922*)

Some people go to extremes. Some people would not fast even without any valid reason and some people expect the very ill, old, pregnant and nursing mothers to fast. Both of these practices are wrong. There is no coercion in Islamic injunctions and one should also take advantage of the leaves granted by Allah. Islam has laid down some conditions for some of the commandments. For fasting this is one of the conditions that one is not allowed to fast if such a person is sick, or if fasting would definitely make such a person sick, or would increase the illness like being pregnant or nursing mother, or if someone is so old that fasting would incapacitate such a person. One should avoid extreme conduct. One should neither quit fasting on the basis of minor complaints of feeling weak nor should one insist on fasting in the presence of true and valid reasons.

Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s.) has given very valuable advice on this issue. He said, "If Allah had

so willed he would not have set limits for this Ummah as He did not set any limits in other Ummahs (religions). He did so for our own benefit. As I understand the truth is this that when a person supplicates to Allah in true humility, truth and sincerity not to be kept from the blessings of this month, then Allah does not prevent such a person from getting the blessings of this month. In this condition (of heart) if a person becomes ill during the month of *Ramazan* then this illness becomes a blessing in such persons favor. This is because the outcome of every deed depends upon the motive behind it. A believer should prove his/her courage in the way of Allah by his/her acts. If someone is prevented from fasting because of sickness but had sincere desire to fast and the heart is full of grief because of this loss then angels would fast for such a person. If such a person is not trying to find an excuse then Allah will certainly not deprive such a person of the reward. (*Fatawa Ahmadyya*)

### ***Fidya***

The general teaching is that one should fast and if he has the capacity then pay *Fidya* as well. Fasting is obligatory and paying *Fidya* is practice of the Holy Prophet (saw) and a way of showing one's gratitude that Allah has given the strength to fast and enables such a person to get greater reward from Allah.

Fasting is not obligatory for such a person who could not fast for few days because of sickness. However such a person can pay *Fidya* with the intention that Allah may enable him/her to make up for these fasts later and should not deprive him of the reward of the fasts lost.

*Fidya* is mandatory only for persons who have the capacity to pay and are unlikely to make up for the lost fasts because of long term illness, extreme old age, being pregnant or wet nurse.

If the condition preventing from fasting is temporary then one must fast after that condition is removed regardless of *Fidya* payment.

Once a person asked Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s.) that he never kept any fast in his life, what should he pay for *Fidya*? He replied, "Allah Does not burden anybody beyond his capacity. Pay *fidya* according to your capacity and make covenant that you will keep every fast in future." (*Al Badr, Vol. 1, No. 12, January 16, 1903, p 91*)

### **Determining The Amount of *Fidya***

While determining *Fidya*, this is the principal mentioned in the Holy Quran, "*Min Ausata ma tut'amoona ahleekum*" – What you on average feed your family; meaning that you should feed somebody according to your average standard. Hazrat Imam Abu Haneefa has determined it to be equal to nearly 3.5 lbs of wheat. This will be the *Fidya* for a lost fast which will suffice for two meals.

### **Who Should Be given *Fidya***

It is not necessary to give *Fidya* only to a poor person who is fasting. The idea is to feed any deserving poor person regardless whether such a person is fasting or not. On the other hand *Fidya* is mandatory only if such a person can afford it. While a person who cannot afford it, remorse, seeking forgiveness, prayer and remembrance of Allah would suffice.

Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s.) said, "Those travelers and sick people who do not have the hope of fasting any time in future, for example, a very old weak person or weak pregnant woman who knows that after delivering the baby she would be incapacitated because of suckling the baby and the year will pass in this condition, for such people it is allowed that they should not fast because they are incapable of fasting and pay *Fidya*. *Fidya* alone is allowed for extremely old person or some one who would never have the strength to fast. But for the rest it is not allowed that just by paying *Fidya* only they would be excused from fasting. To allow only *Fidya* to those people who regain strength to fast after recovering from illness, would mean opening the door of mischief." (*Fatawa Ahmadiyya, p 183*)

### ***Fidya* Enables Us to Fast**

Hazrat Promised Messiah (a.s.) said, "Once I thought why Allah has prescribed *Fidya*? I was given the knowledge that it enables one to fast. Allah alone gives strength and capacity to do anything and one should beseech only Allah for every need. He is Omnipotent. If He so wills He can grant the strength to fast to even a person suffering from tuberculosis. Therefore, it is appropriate that if a person sees that he is being deprived of the fast, then such a person should supplicate that O Allah! this is your blessed month and I could not benefit from its blessings and I do not know whether I shall be alive next year or

not or I would be able to complete the fasts that I am unable to keep now. If he seeks the power and strength from Allah then I am certain that Allah will bestow strength on such a soul." (*Malfoozat, Volume 4, p288*).

### Niyyat (Intention) is Essential for Fasting

If a person decides to keep fast he must have the intention to fast. Hazrat Hafsa (rata) narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "If one does not make intention before dawn (*Fajar*) his fast is not counted." (*Tirmizi, Book of Fasting*)

In Islam, as the Holy Prophet (saw) said, deeds are judged by motives. Therefore sincerity and righteous intention is a prerequisite before every Islamic worship. The same condition is laid down for fasting as well. It is better that one should make determination to keep fast the next day before going to sleep at night.

It is not necessary to say any specific prayer to make this intention. In fact intention is that determination by heart and soul that one is going to give up eating and drinking for the sake of Allah and this should be done before dawn. But if somebody has a genuine excuse, for example one did not know that the month of Ramazan is starting or did not wake up in time or if there is any other excuse of this kind then such person can make the intention of fasting before noon as long as he/she had not taken any food or water since dawn.

It is recorded in a hadith that once the report of sighting of new moon of Ramazan in a suburb of Medina was received before noon the next day. On hearing this the Holy Prophet (saw) declared, "Whoever has not taken any food or drink since dawn should make the intention and keep fast and if anybody has taken any food or drink he should make up this fast after Ramazan." (*Abu Daud, Book of Fasting*)

In case of voluntary fasting one can make the intention of fasting before noon if one has not taken anything by mouth since dawn. It is narrated in a hadith, "Sometimes the Holy Prophet (saw) would come to his home and ask for food. If no food was available then he would say I would keep fast today." (*Saheeh Muslim, Book of Fasting*)

It is evident from this hadith that if someone had no reason to have an intention to keep fast before

dawn then one can do this during the day although these were voluntary fasts of Holy Prophet (saw).

Once a person asked from the Promised Messiah (a.s.) that he was sitting inside house and believed that there still was time before dawn so he ate some food with the intention to keep fast. Later on he found out that it was already after dawn when he ate, What should he do now? The Promised Messiah (a.s.) said, "In this particular situation his fast was counted and he need not make up for this fast because he had thought that he has taken proper precaution and his intention was correct." (*Al Badr, February 14, 1907*)

### Etiquette of *Sehri* (Meal before Dawn)

Hazrat Anas Bin Malik narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "O Muslims! Eat *Sehri* because there is blessing in *Sehri* meal" (*Bukhari, Book of Fasting, Chapter-Blessing of Sehri*)

*Sehri* is an Arabic word meaning the food that is eaten early in the morning before dawn. The Jews were not prescribed *Sehri* whereas Muslims were ordered it. The Holy Prophet (saw), noting the difference, said, "Having *Sehri* is one of the differences between ours and Jewish fasts." (*Sunan Al Daari, Book of Fasting*)

The timing of *Sehri* starts after midnight and continues till dawn. However, eating *Sehri* at midnight was not the practice of the Holy Prophet (saw). The True blessing is in following the practice of the Holy Prophet (saw) and he used to eat a little just before dawn. The companions of the Holy Prophet (saw) used to follow the same practice. It is narrated, "there used to be very little gap between eating of *Sehri* meal and *Fajr* prayer." (*Tirmizi, Book of Fasting*)

Hazrat Anas said that Hazrat Zaid Bin Thabit narrated, "Once we had *Sehri* meal with the Holy Prophet (saw) and then we started *Fajr* prayer. Hazrat Anas asked about the time difference between *Sehri* and *Fajr* prayer to which Hazrat Zaid replied that it would be equal to time needed to recite fifty verses of Holy Quran." (*Bukhari, Book of Fasting*)

Hazrat Sohail Bin Saad narrates, "After finishing my *Sehri* meal I had to hurry to the mosque to join the Holy Prophet (saw) in *Fajr* prayer." (*Bukhari, Book of Timings of Prayers*).

While insisting on having *Sehri* meal, the Holy Prophet (saw) also explained the wisdom of it. Hazrat Ibn-e-Abbas narrates, "The Holy Prophet (saw) said: Have *Sehri* meal in order to ease the hardship of fasting during the day, and make it easier for you to say prayer during the night by taking a small nap." (*Ibn e Maja, Book-Fasting*)

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (saw) mentioned that "Eat this blessed meal of morning in the last part of night." (*Al Jaame Al Sagheer, Part One, Hadith # 2392*) The Holy Prophet (saw) also said, "Eat *Sehri* even if it is only a sip of water." (*Al Jaame Al Sagheer, Part One, Hadeeth # 3293*)

### **Sehri of The Holy Prophet (saw)**

Hazrat Arbaz Bin Saaria narrates, "In *Ramazan* I heard the Holy Prophet (saw) calling his companions for *Sehri* and saying that they should come for this blessed meal." (*Sunan Nisai, Book-Fasting*)

Another companion narrated that the Holy Prophet (saw) was having *Sehri* meal and said, "This is a blessing that Allah has given you, so never give it up." (*Nisai, Book-Fasting*)

Hazrat Anas said that once at the time of *Sehri* the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "O Anas! I am going to fast today, bring me something to eat." Hazrat Anas stated that he brought some dates and water. By that time Hazrat Bilal had already called first *Azan*. Huzoor (saw) said, "Anas! find out if there is anyone (in the Mosque) who would join me in *Sehri*." Hazrat Anas asked Hazrat Zaid to come. He said I have already started my fast after eating *Sehri*. Huzoor said that we are also going to keep fast. Thereafter Hazrat Zaid Bin Thabit ate *Sehri* with Huzoor (saw). (*Nisai, Book-Fasting*)

This shows that the Holy Prophet (saw) did not like any formalities and would start his fast by eating whatever is available, so much so that the Holy Prophet (saw) said that dates are such wholesome *Sehri* for a believer.

The Holy Prophet (saw) had arranged, for the convenience of Muslims, to call out two *Azans* before *Fajr*. Hazrat Bilal used to call first *Azan* before the break of dawn to indicate that the time for *Sehri* is about to finish so that if somebody is saying *Tahajjud* prayer or still sleeping, he should eat *Sehri*. Hazrat Ibn-e-Maktoom used to call the *Azan* the second time

after dawnbreak indicating that the time for *Sehri* is finished. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (saw) said that when Bilal calls *Azan* keep on eating and when Ibn-e-Maktoom calls *Azan* quit eating. (*Bukhari, Book of Fasting*)

Hazrat Abu Huraira narrated that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "If anyone of you hears the *Azan* while still eating then one should not stop eating until meal is finished according to the need." (*Abu Daood, Book-Fasting*)

### **Is It Essential to Eat Sehri?**

Keeping a fast without eating *Sehri* is not blessed but if someone wakes up after daybreak and time for *Sehri* is finished then it is allowed to keep fast without eating *Sehri* but it should not be made a routine practice.

It is extremely important to observe the limits set by Allah. Every righteous deed could be considered righteous only as long as the limits set by Allah and the practices of the Holy Prophet (saw) are followed. The Holy Prophet (saw) did not like the practice of keeping fast without eating *Sehri*. Rather, he said, "Eat *Sehri* as there is blessing in eating *Sehri*."

### **Etiquette of Aftaari (Breaking the Fast)**

Hazrat Umar narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "When the day is passed and night starts and sun is set, one should break the fast." (*Bukhari, Book-Fasting*)

Hazrat Sohail Bin Saad narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "As long as people would keep on hastening to break the fast they will keep on getting blessings and favors of Allah." (*Bukhari*)

The Holy prophet (saw) said, "As long as people will hasten to break their fast, Islam will remain strong because Jews and Christians used to delay the breaking of their fasts." (*Abu Daood*)

Hazrat Abu Huraira narrated that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "Allah has revealed that of all his servants the dearest to him are those who are quickest to break their fasts." (*Tirmizi*)

Another companion of the Holy Prophet (saw) narrates that once he was in the company of the Holy Prophet (saw) in one of his journeys. After sunset the Holy Prophet (saw) asked someone to bring *Aftaari* (Food to break the Fast). He replied: Huzoor let it get

a little dark. Again, The Holy Prophet (saw) said: Bring *Aftaari*. He again said that Huzoor (saw) there is still too much light. Huzoor again said: Bring *Aftaari*. He brought *Aftaari*. After breaking the fast Huzoor (saw) pointed towards the east and said that when you witness darkness on the eastern horizon after sunset you should break your fast. (*Saheeh Muslim*)

An incident is reported after the demise of the Holy Prophet (saw). Two disciples of the companions of the Holy Prophet (saw), Hazrats Masrooq and Abu Attiya came to Hazrat Ayesha (raa) and asked, "O Mother of the faithful! Among the companions of the Holy Prophet (saw) there are two, none of the two is negligent in acts of piety and righteousness. But one of them is quick in breaking the fast (after the time of fast is up) and quick in saying his prayers (says every prayer at its earliest time) and the other companion is slow both in breaking his fast and saying prayers." Hazrat Ayesha (raa) asked, "Of the two, who is the one quick in breaking fast and saying prayers?" When she was told that it is Hazrat Abdullah Bin Masood, she said, "The Holy Prophet (saw) used to do the same." (*Minan Al Tirmizi*)

Talking about the time of *Aftaari*, the Holy Prophet (saw) said: "At every time of *Aftari* Allah frees some persons from fire. This act is repeated every evening."

The time of breaking the fast (*Aftaari*) is a very blessed moment. It is narrated in a hadith that the one who fasts is promised two occasions of happiness. He/She is given first happiness when fast is broken (completed) and second happiness will be given when he/she will be granted audience with Allah because of fasting. (*Ibn-e-Maja*)

Therefore one should not waste the most blessed moments of *Aftaari*. One should make special supplication during these moments of acceptance of prayers. The Holy Prophet (saw) used to say the following prayer at the time of *Aftaari*, "O Allah! I kept fast for your sake only and I am breaking it with, the food that only you provided." (*Abu Daood*) Then he used to thank Allah after breaking his fast and

would say this prayer, "My thirst is removed and strength is restored and if Allah so wills the reward is established." (*Abu Daood*).

### **The *Aftaari* of The Holy Prophet (saw)**

The Holy Prophet (saw) did not use any formalities in his *Aftaari* either. Hazrat Anas narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) used to break his fast with a few dates just before Maghrib prayer. And if dates were not available he would break the fast with few sips of water. (*Abu Daood*)

The Holy Prophet (saw) enjoined upon his Ummah (followers) the same simple *Aftaari*. He (saw) said, "When any one of you breaks a fast then he should eat a date as it has a lot of blessings and benefits in it. And if date is not available then break the fast with water as it is purest." (*Tirmizi*)

Hazrat Imam Maalik narrates that once a poor woman asked from Hazrat Ayesha (for some food). On that day Hazrat Ayesha (raa) was fasting and except from a loaf of bread there was nothing to eat. She (raa) told her mistress to give that loaf to the woman. Her mistress said there is nothing else for you, what are you going to break your fast with? Hazrat Ayesha (raa) asked her to give away that loaf regardless. In the evening some one sent goat meat as a gift. Hazrat Ayesha called her mistress and said, "Here, eat this, it is much better than that loaf of bread."

### **The Reward of Providing *Aftaari***

Hazrat Zaid bin Khalid (raa) narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "If someone provides for *aftaari* so that one can break the fast then that person will be given the same reward as the one who kept the fast. But no reward will be taken away from the person who kept the fast." (*Tirmizi*) Therefore, in the time of the Holy Prophet (saw) the companions used to provide food for breaking the fast of others.

On one occasion the Holy Prophet (saw) went to the house of Hazrat Saad Bin Maaz (raa) for *Aftaari*. The Holy Prophet (saw) broke his fast and said, "Your food was eaten by pious people and angels prayed for you." (*Ibn-e-Maja*).

## THE BLESSED DAYS

Hazrat Maulana Nooruddin Khalifatul Masih I

These days of RAMADHAN are very blessed. ...Allah has given very special commandments in this month and has especially stressed for their compliance. Those who are either on a journey or are sick, they have been commanded to fast after their journey or when they are healthy enough for fasting. But for others, eating and intercourse with wife during day are both prohibited.

Eating is essential for the preservation of self and intercourse is necessary for preservation of race. But during Ramadhan Allah has commanded to desist from both of them during day time. Nothing is more important than both of them. No doubt, breathing is also essential, but man can not live without it. Allah has made this month for this very purpose that when, man is engaged in all other works during the eleven months, and remains busy in eating and drinking and having intercourse with his wife in these months, he has been asked to desist from these things for one month only during the day.

On the one hand, man has been prohibited to engage in these very essential works, and on the other, he has been ordered to read the Holy Quran, establish the Ramadhan and give *Sadaqa* also. In this commandment this has been emphasized that one has to adopt unnecessary things by desisting from necessary things. Then on the other hand, why trivial things are acquired contrary to the commandments of God.

During the month of Ramadhan, there should be lot of supplications, reading of the Holy Quran and establishing of the Ramadhan. It has been written in *Hadith* that he who fasts during the month of Ramadhan with faith and for seeking *sawab*, his former sins will be forgiven.

Alas! Some people say that during the month of Ramadhan, their expenses soar high whereas it is not correct. In truth, such people are unaware of the reality of fasting. At the time of breakfast early in the morning, they stuff so much that they keep on burping due to indigestion till the afternoon. When their food nears digestion, they get tasty dishes prepared for the evening meal and eat like gluttons

and become sluggish and heavily sleepy.

They do not think that fasting was a sort of exercise for self and not that they should spend far more than before and eat like gluttons. Remember very well that the Holy Quran started being revealed in this month and it is a guidance and light for the people. We should act according to the guidance provided by this Holy Book. Fasting brings affluence and leads to the ways of ease in mundane affairs. Remember that true comfort comes either after one dies or by desisting from evil deeds. Therefore, fasting also brings comfort. With it, man can attain nearness to God and become *Muttaqi*. If people ask, how can one attain nearness to God, then tell them, Allah says, "I am near. When some one calls me, I answer the call of him who supplicates." (*Haqiq al-Furqan*, vol. 1, p. 306-307)

(Taken, with thanks, from the Ahmadiyya Gazette, Canada)

### Prayer to begin the Fast:

وَلِيَصُومَ عِدَّةً تَوَيْتُ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ

"I hereby make the intention to observe the Fast of Ramadhan tomorrow."

### Prayer at braking the Fast:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي لَكَ صُمْتُ، وَإِيَّاكَ أَفْطَرْتُ

"O Allah, for Thee I kept the Fast and upon Thee I have faith and I am breaking the Fast with the provisions provided by Thee."

## RAMADHAN: FOR THE BODY, MIND AND SOUL

(Mubasher Ahmad)

Ramadhan is the ninth lunar month in the Islamic calendar, a blessed month for the believers throughout the world who must fast from dawn to sunset. For all healthy Muslim adults, it is obligatory not to eat and drink anything from early dawn to sunset. While fasting, married couples must also restrain from sex.

*"But whoever among you is sick or on journey, shall fast a like number of other days, and those who find it really difficult, an expiation is required - feeding of a poor person."* (The Qur'an 2:184)

More than just a bodily control over the pangs of thirst, hunger and sexual urge, fasting in the month of Ramadhan is a spiritual exercise - one of the *Pillars of Islam*. Reduction in the food intake is substituted by increased humility and spirit of giving and sharing. One must resist all temptations. Specially, any expression of anger, hate and contempt is strictly forbidden. Acts of charity, grace and complaisance are enhanced. Family gets closer through early morning awakening and praying in congregation and in the evening at the dinner table to "break the fast" together. Prayerfulness is the norm of the day. Late in the evening, extra prayers called *Tarawih* are made in congregation in mosques. One may opt for additional early pre-dawn prayer called *Tahajjud*.

Mosques attract increased numbers of worshipers in the month of Ramadhan. Many Muslim communities arrange for getting together for spiritual fellowship by reading and listening to the Qur'an. Classes are conducted for in-depth study of the Holy Qur'an.

The month long fasting helps to feel for those who suffer hunger and starvation; hence the humane bond receives extra strength. Often reference is made to the practice of Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, who was well-known for his benevolence and charity. During the month of Ramadhan, the Muslim tradition reminds the believers that the breeze of the mercy of Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, would become a strong gale of generosity.

It is recorded in the history books of Islam that Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, started

receiving the revelations of the Qur'an in the month of Ramadhan. He was in the cave of Hira, near the city of Mecca, engaged in deep meditation when, towards the end of Ramadhan, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and asked him to recite:

*"Recite in the name of your Lord Who created,  
Created man from a clot  
Recite! And your Lord is the Most Bounteous;  
Who taught by the pen,  
Taught man what he knew not."*

(The Qur'an 96:2-6)

Thus the mission of Islam started. That historic night in Islam is known as the Holy Night of Destiny -- "*Laylatul Qadr*".

Therefore, the last ten days and nights are very important for the prayerful. Some devout Muslims spend this portion of Ramadhan at the mosque in seclusion seeking personal spiritual blessing of God's closeness to man's heart. They seek the mystic experience of communion with God in these blissful nights, spending time in prayers, reciting the Qur'an, meditating and focusing on *Zikr* - "the remembrance of Allah".

Fasting gives them the sharpness of the soul to be one with *The One*.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

The Rishta Nata Department is revising and updating the lists of marriageable boys and girls and it will be highly appreciated if the parents of the marriageable boys and girls contact the undersigned with their particulars. Except for those who registered themselves with the Department within the last six months all others are requested to send their latest particulars at an early date. This is very important in view of the urgency of the situation. Jazakumullah. All the particulars will be used with due care for the benefit of the parties concerned.

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## THE SPIRITUAL OBJECT AND PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF RAMADHAN

By Ahmad Sita, Cleveland, Ohio

Once again, it is that time of the year for Muslims to observe fasting during the month of Ramadhan. As one of the pillars of Islam, fasting has been decreed for all healthy adult Muslims who are not on a journey. The concept of fasting is not new. It has always been present in one limited form or another among all the divinely-inspired religions throughout history. The perfection of fasting as in religion itself, can however be found only in Islam.

As the Holy Quran reminds us of the origin and significance of fasting, it says:

*"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil" (2:184).*

We read again from the Holy Book that:

*"The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Quran was revealed as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month let him fast therein. But whosoever is sick or on a journey, shall fast the same number of other days. Allah desires ease for you, and He desires that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful" (2:186).*

A close look at these verses of the Holy Quran will disclose the basis, importance and purpose of the month of Ramadan. In order to stress the Divine origin of fasting, we are here reminded that the Holy Quran was revealed during the month of Ramadhan. This of course is a metaphor. The explanation is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) received his first revelation in the last week of one of the Ramadhan months. Thereafter, the rest of the verses of the Holy Quran were revealed to him progressively over a period of about twenty three years. This period of revelation extended all the way to the end of his ministry.

After that first revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), the angel Gabriel recited the Holy Quran completely with him during the other Ramadhan months. This act of rehearsal was a Divine

plan to ensure that the verses were firmly fixed in his mind for future remembrance. The Holy Quran as we know has been written for all of mankind and for all time. Metamorphically speaking therefore, it is often said that this Holy Book was revealed during Ramadhan. Ibn Abas has related that:

The messenger of Allah was the most generous of all people, and he was most generous in Ramadhan when Gabriel met him, and he met him in every night of Ramadhan and read with him the Quran; so the messenger of Allah was more generous in the doing of good than the wind which is sent forth on every human being.

In addition to this, it must be borne in mind that the reading of the Holy Quran during the early morning hours is an important righteous action. The following verse of the Book confirms this fact. Thus it says:

*"Observe prayer from the declining and paling of the sun till the darkness of the night, and recite the Quran at dawn. Verily, the recitation of the Quran at dawn is specially acceptable to Allah." (17:79)*

From this verse, we can see that reading the Quran at dawn during the month of Ramadhan will be even more acceptable to the Almighty God. Sleep as we know is the best way to rest. Naturally, the best time also to enjoy this rest is at dawn when it becomes most difficult to break that comfortable state of slumber. Because of this, the early part of the morning is best suited for believers to seek special Divine communion. In the tranquility of the early morning hours when we seem to be alone with the Creator, the reading of the Holy Quran or the offering of prayers at this time is most preferable to God. This spiritual fact must be remembered during Ramadhan and indeed at any other time.

According to one law of nature, everything can fade from memory over time. This particularly happens when knowledge once acquired, is not put to regular use. As a result, when we read the Holy Quran and memorize verses, it is very essential to use them for daily prayers. That regular use is the most



effective way to remember Quranic verses. There is another related benefit of reading the Holy Quran. Sometimes, when a mistake creeps in one's memory on any of these verses used for prayers, that error is unconsciously repeated many times. By reading the Holy Quran and going over chapters or verses used for daily prayers, such errors will be discovered and eliminated. Consequently, the use of a methodical approach to the study of the Quran will help us defeat or contain the law of nature that makes us forget some of the verses of our Holy Book.

Fasting is an obligatory spiritual activity to all those who are healthy and are at their station of residence. Those who are unable to fast for reasons such as sickness, pregnancy, maternity, extreme old age or on a journey are exempted. However, they must fast an equivalent number of other days that were missed, or feed a needy person with average food for the same number of days. This way, the blessings of Ramadhan will still be obtained.

Fasting is not meant as a hardship for Muslims. The fact that it is a prescription from the Almighty God Himself should convince everyone that suffering in any way is not part of the grand purpose of fasting. On the contrary, the month of Ramadhan is the month in which unequalled blessings can be obtained to the extent that we must reflect and glorify the Almighty God. As we read from the Holy Quran concerning this subject, Allah says:

*"...And fasting is good for you if you only knew" (2:185).*

The spiritual significance of fasting has been well documented as an act of faith that purifies the soul. When we fast, we are reminded to abstain from any form of foul conversations, to practice universal kindness and refrain from immoral conduct of any kind. When thirst and hunger aggravate fatigue during the day, we should be prompted of the existing circumstances of the needy, those who are seriously ill and the handicapped. We must accordingly reflect and be drawn to their condition in a way so as to develop humility, compassion and humanitarian generosity towards them. By doing so we will be able to extend proportional gratefulness to God that can match our more favorable conditions.

The Almighty God is Immortal and so has no need for nourishment by way of food and drink. He

is pleased by seeing His creatures worship Him. This means that every time we fast, we bring ourselves closer to God in terms of Spiritual development. Hunger can indeed be used for the salvation of the human soul. We are still limited in our spiritual development in this sense since no mortal human can do constant fasting. The result however is that sins can, and are indeed forgiven because of fasting during the month of Ramadhan. This in turn actuates that limited spiritual development.

Ramadhan does give us every potent incentive towards righteous action. The demonstration of self-discipline in the form of self-denial during this holy month is only a minor, temporary sacrifice, but it has a grandiose spiritual significance to help us achieve everlasting peace in the Hereafter.

Fasting has some physical benefits also. The most notable among them is weight loss with its many healthy benefits. When individuals fast, it takes a great deal of conviction to remain in that state for a period of time. The resulting hunger pains once ignored, can only last for a short time. They may return but they also always subside. Weight gain as we know, is mainly achieved through the combination of passionate indulgence in food and physical inactivity. Each one of them by itself can be a catalyst for weight gain. However, when both conditions are heavily present, it can lead to obesity and the resulting undesirable consequences. This is so because obesity is known to be associated with many deadly diseases including diabetes, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke. Extra body weight has also been positively linked to lower back pain, hip and leg injuries.

Fasting during the month of Ramadhan or at any other time is usually done in the quest for spiritual growth, but the physical benefit concerning weight control is realized in the process. Instead of nutritional self-indulgence, those who fast, use self-discipline to promote self-denial in order to control their body weights as an added benefit. Even without increased physical activity, fasting alone can be used by everyone as an effective method for weight loss. By extension, the maintenance of desirable weight levels after Ramadhan should not be difficult. To those who are overweight and those who wish to retain their current body weights, the month of

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## HOMEOPATHY - MEDICINE FOR HUMAN NATURE

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Conventional medicine cannot cure or treat satisfactorily many conditions. Alternative medicine is being sought increasingly by people in the USA and the world over. Out of pocket expenditures associated with alternative therapy use in the USA was estimated at 12-15 billion dollars in the year 1996.

Of all the alternative therapies available, homeopathy has the most appeal. This system of medicine is derived from both natural medicine and orthodox science. It brings together the best of both worlds.

Homeopathy is practiced widely in Europe, Indian subcontinent, Russia, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and South Africa. It is called "The Royal Medicine" because Britain's royal family has utilized it since the 1830's. Dizzy Gillespie said, "There have been two great revelations in my life. The first was bebop, the second was homeopathy."

The implication in allopathic (conventional) medicine is that the body has little ability to combat disease and must rely on drugs. The homeopathic medicines work with, rather than against, the body's inherent immune and defense system. Homeopathy treats the mind and the body.

Homeopathy is a natural pharmaceutical science that utilizes extremely small doses of substances to stimulate a person's immune and defense system. Each medicine is prescribed according to the "Law of Similars" - that is, a substance which creates, in overdose, a specific set of symptoms in a healthy person, will cure these similar symptoms in a sick person, when given in a very small dose.

Homeopathic microdose medicines are actually used routinely in two branches of allopathic medicine. One is vaccination, where a tiny amount of deactivated microorganism is given to stimulate an immune response that protects people from the disease that is caused by larger amounts of the active germ. The other is allergy shots, where tiny amounts of allergy-triggering substances are given, to allow recipients to tolerate larger exposures without ill effects.

The Law of Similars has been used throughout history and throughout the world, both within healthcare and outside it. Hippocrates said: "The same things which cause disease cure it." Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician and chemist in the early 1800's, was the first to develop the Law of Similars into a systematic empirical health science and practice. He coined the word Homeopathy. Homeopathy is neither an eccentric idea issued from a crank nor a philosophy, neither a form of mysticism nor a religion. It is quite simply a treatment method which acts through a phenomenon of qualitative reaction while conventional medicine acts through phenomenon of quantitative action.

In homeopathy, once the remedy has delivered its medicine, the body's immune system kicks into action and begins to heal itself. The remedy is like a gentle nudge to get the ball rolling. The smaller the dose of a remedy, the higher the potency. In homeopathy, less is more.

For over 200 years, and despite, until recently, strong orthodox rejection, this therapy has established itself throughout the world. Its use is steadily increasing and it is claimed to be an effective, safe and acceptable form of care.

Mark Twain said: "The introduction of homeopathy forced the old school doctor to stir around and learn something of a rational nature about his business...."

Critics of homeopathy have confidently stated that its success is due solely to placebo responses. It is only in the last 15 years or so that placebo controlled trials have been done and an independent criteria-based review of the 107 trials conducted up to 1991 noted that 77% were positive - with the trials of higher scientific merit taken separately still showing homeopathy as superior to placebo. In a study by British researchers in 1989, it was shown that homeopathic microdose of poison ivy (*Rhus tox*) provide significant relief from the pain of fibromyalgia (pain and stiffness in muscles and ligaments). Studies, however, are difficult to do in homeopathy. Homeopathy treats the person, not just

the illness. Two people with similar symptoms, who would be given the same medicines by a mainstream physician, might be given different medicines by a homeopath, depending on their temperaments and other personal attributes. An ideal study should include people with similar temperaments, similar attributes and similar symptoms. This would be very difficult, indeed.

A homeopath would not prescribe one remedy for a person's headache, another for his stomach and another for his depression. The homeopath tries to find the single remedy that creates, in overdose, the totality of symptoms the person experiences. Homeopathy is time consuming for the practitioner and the patient. It is a lesson in patience and steadfastness.

To cope with modern trends and culture, homeopathy practice has changed. Commercial preparations have appeared in an effort to make homeopathy user friendly and practitioner friendly. In the last decade, self-treatment guides and medicine preparations have appeared, suggesting homeopathic remedies for common complaints. When remedies are mixed together, it remains uncertain which was effective. As homeopathy gains greater popularity, in the coming years, such commercial practice patterns will increase and are inevitable. These problems can be greatly reduced by consumers learning some of the principles of classical homeopathy.

Allopathic medicine has done much to alleviate misery and pain. It is at its best in treating trauma, medical and surgical emergencies. It has enhanced diagnostic capabilities.

Good results are achieved with surgery in joint replacements, cosmetic surgery, reconstructive surgery and organ transplant surgery. Care of fractures and dislocations is excellent.

A good rule of thumb to follow is to seek help from conventional medicine for acute care and life threatening emergencies.

Homeopathy can offer therapeutic options:

- where conventional care has failed or plateaued
- or no conventional treatments exist
- or they are contraindicated
- or they are not tolerated from side effects
- for allergies
- for chronic conditions.

When justified by clinical necessity, there is nothing incompatible nor heretical in combining homeopathic treatment with conventional care. It is the duty of a physician homeopath to use these treatment modalities in the best possible way in the best interest of his patient. It has been estimated by French homeopath, Jean Boiron, that 70% of all medical problems can be successfully treated with homeopathy, at a significantly lower cost than conventional medicine and with minimal risk and side effects.

Preventative care and maintenance is best done by behavior modification, dietary regulation and where permissible, a regular exercise regime. Herbal medicine and vitamins may help.

Hazrat Khalifatul Massih IV (through his lectures on homeopathy on MTA, now compiled in a book) has provided us with a strong impetus to study homeopathy and benefit from it and use it in the service of mankind.

The study of homeopathy is valuable for all those who wish to understand the laws of nature, the principles of healing and the meaning of health and disease. Of all the branches of medicine, homeopathy is most closely related to laws of nature and human nature. As Allah says about Islam, "and follow the nature made by Allah - the nature in which He has created mankind...CH 30:3.

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### *The Spiritual Objects ...*

(continued from page 17)

Ramadan should be used for that extra advantage concerning weight control. As a matter of fact, fasting has been used as a proven method for weight loss for thousands of years with many attendant benefits and no ill-effects.

Fasting during the month of Ramadhan is not meant to weary the flesh. Instead, it is an excellent privilege to seek special favors from God. All the disciplines we acquire during this holy month are meant to be used after Ramadhan for the control of our individual actions. As a result, Ramadhan is an opportunity that must be used for the regulation of human behavior. This way, we ensure progress in the search for our physical, moral and spiritual development.

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**COMING OF THE HOLY PROPHET**  
(PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAH BE UPON HIM)

There came upon the world a dark and fearsome night,  
Filled with all kinds of corruption and evil;  
All sources of divine light gave way,  
To the forces of evil.

Darkness upon darkness,  
Misguidance upon misguidance;  
The Iblees had placed all of its wicked forces,  
In closed ranks.

In the hurricane of corruption,  
Both land and sea were engulfed;  
Whether in Persia or Paran,  
Whether in Rome, or in Bukhara.

Mortal humans pretended to be gods,  
Forgetting the grand status of their God;  
His Holy name was usurped,  
By the followers of evil forces.

Then from the Lord on High,  
A throne of light descended upon the earth;  
It was accompanied with full armor,  
By a large force of the angels.

An event full of divine light appeared,  
It was brighter than the Sun,  
It came with countless manifestation,  
Of the light of God.

Falsehood was put to naught,  
All kinds of corruption was removed;  
When that bright Sun,  
Made its presence known.

Iblis was destroyed  
His works were annihilated;  
The floodgates of the Unity of God,  
Spared neither its home, nor its front door.

He is the Holy Muhammad,  
The lord of us all;  
Whose decoration and adornment,  
Is the light of prophethood.

Belovedness and beauty,  
Has enveloped him all around;  
All powers of East and of West,  
Are bowing at his feet.

The company of the Prophets,  
With its light like the Sun and the Moon;  
I declare in the name of God,  
Was just a prelude to his appearance.

Every obedient servant of his,  
Recites blessings upon him;  
During days and nights,  
Respectfully uttering his name.

That generous being came,  
When he was blessed by his own prayers;  
We the beggars at his doors,  
Received all we had wished.

The manifestation of the Divine appeared,  
When we returned after witnessing it;  
Our insight into the beauty and truth,  
Was increased hundreds-fold.

O eye that has gone into slumber in the gloom of Autumn,  
Open up, for the season has changed;  
O sleepy soul,  
Wake up, for the Spring is here.

The leader of the Prophets has come,  
His leader is Allah Himself;  
His elevated throne is high,  
Above all other thrones.

From the mirror reflecting the light of God,  
There did appear the bride;  
Of the law of God,  
Fully laced with her adornment.

The Lord God did descend,  
Upon the Mount of Paran of Muhammad,  
With a grandeur that Moses,  
Had no strength to bear.

The best of all the memories,  
Are the memories of the moments,  
Spent at the feet,  
Of his remembrance;

That full Moon of his,  
The Mahdi was his obedient servant;  
He always remembered him,  
With tears in his eyes.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,  
Whatever he possessed,  
He offered it to him,  
Indeed he devoted himself to him entirely.

His heart was ever brimful,  
In his love and devotion;  
He was perfect in sincerity,  
Just as a perfectly true loved should be.

The Messiah was the spiritual host of the age,  
But he did not possess anything on his own;  
The elixir was of the Holy Prophet,  
His were the goblets that served it.

The Messiah was the musician,  
All his companions were the devotees of the Holy Prophet;  
He was singing his tune, but the song belonged to the Holy Prophet,  
The Messiah's lips were moving, but the message was of the Holy Prophet.

O Allah, I am also one,  
Of the birds captured by him;  
My heart sings his song,  
My lips utter his name.

Show me with my own eyes,  
That he has graced my threshold;  
Let my ears hear the sweet melody,  
Of his footsteps coming to me.

May I be granted too,  
An abundant manifestation of his continence,  
Then let it so happen,  
That his message is revealed upon my heart.

Let a light descend from his high station,  
In the form of beautiful spiritual melodies,  
May those melodies give out fragrance,  
Of spiritual bliss all around.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS 1998

Dec 31,97	Wednesday	First Day of Ramadan	
Jan. 4	Sunday	Programs/Plans for 1998 by each local Jamaat	Local*
Jan. 30	Friday	Eidul-Fitr	
Feb. 22	Sunday	Musleh Maud Day (Historical Feb. 20)	Local
Mar. 22	Sunday	Masih Maud Day (Historical March 23)	Local
Apr 7	Tue.	Eidul-Adhia	
Apr 24-26	Fri-Sun	Majlise Shura at Bait-ur-Rahman	
May 24	Sunday	Khilafat Day (Historical May 27)	Local
Jun 26-28	Fri-Sun	Jalsa Salana USA at Washington Metro Area	National
July 3-5	Fri-Sun	Jalsa Salana Canada at Toronto	Canada
Jul 17-19	Fri-Sun	Ijtema Mid-West Lajna	Mid-West
Jul 31-Aug 2	Fri-Sun	Jalsa Salana UK at Islamabad	UK
Aug 7-9	Fri-Sun	Ijtema Khuddam	National
Aug 14-16	Fri-Sun	Ijtema East Coast Lajna	East Coast
Aug 28-30	Fri-Sun	Ijtema West Coast Lajna at Bait-ul-Hameed, Chino, CA	West Coast
Aug 28-30	Fri-Sun	Ijtema West Coast Ansar at Bait-ul-Hameed, Chino, CA	West Coast
Sep 11-13	Fri-Sun	Ijtema and Shura Ansarullah at Baitur-Rahman	National
Sept 20	Sunday	Seeratun Nabi Day**	Regional*
Oct 18	Sunday	Religious Founder's Day	Regional
Nov 15	Sunday	Fulfilment of Hazrat Masih Maud's Prophecy about Dr. Dowie	
Dec 20	Wed.	First Day of Ramadan (Fasting)	
To be decided	Fri-Sun	Jalsa West Coast at Los Angeles	West Coast

- Dates for Local/Regional events can be changed for local needs.

\*\* Additional Seeratun Nabi Days should be arranged. In addition to Regional and or Local level functions, small scale functions for Seeratun Nabi should be arranged at Halqa level at Ahmadi homes.