

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Virtues and Important Rulings of Fasting and Praying in Ramadan

Author: Al-Imaam Ash-Shaikh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah ibn Baz رحمه الله تعالى
Source: www.BinBaz.org.sa
Translator: Abu Ibrahim

This is a concise advice regarding the virtues of praying and fasting in the month of Ramadan and the virtue of racing towards righteous actions with an explanation of some important rulings which may have gone unknown or unnoticed to many people.

It has been firmly reported that the Prophet (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) used to greet his companions with the coming of Ramadan and inform them that it was a month in which the doors of mercy and Paradise were opened, the doors of the hellfire were locked, and the devils were chained, as he (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said,

"Whenever the first night of Ramadan arrives the doors of Paradise are opened and none are closed, the doors of the hellfire are locked and none are opened, the devils are shackled, and a caller calls out, 'O seeker of good embark (upon goodness), and O seeker of evil abstain (from evilness)', and Allah frees inhabitants from the fire, and that is every night." [At-Tirmithi and Ibn Majah].

The Prophet (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said,

"Ramadan has come to you, a blessed month, Allah has covered you thusly bringing down mercy, removing the sins, and answering the supplication, Allah looks upon your competition in Him (for his sake to good deeds) and His angels are boastful of you thusly showing Allah goodness from yourselves, for indeed the miserable one is he whom the mercy of Allah has been prohibited" [Al-Kabeer lit-Tabarany].

He (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) has also said,

"He who fasts Ramadan believing in Allah and hoping for His reward, Allah will forgive what has proceeded from his sins, He who

stands in prayer in the month of Ramadan believing in Allah and hoping for His reward, Allah will forgive what has proceeded from his sins, and He who stands in prayer on the 'Night of Power' believing in Allah and hoping for His reward, Allah will forgive what has proceeded from his sins" [Bukhari and Muslim].

He (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) also said,

"Allah the Mighty and Sublime says, 'every action of the son of Adam is rewarded by ten to seven hundred times except fasting as it is for me (Allah) and I reward for it, he (the one fasting) has given up his desires, food, and drink for Me, the one fasting has two times of happiness; at the time of breaking his fast and when he meets his Lord, and the unpleasant smell from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the sight of Allah than the smell of musk.'" [Bukhari and Muslim].

There are many prophetic statements regarding the virtues of fasting and praying in the month of Ramadan. Consequently, it is a must that the believer seize this opportunity, which is Allah's blessing him with the witnessing of Ramadan, so he hurries to submissiveness (and good deeds) and refrains from evilness (and bad deeds) and strives hard in that which Allah has obliged him with, in particular the five daily prayers for they are the pillar of Islam and the greatest obligation after the testimony of faith. Thusly the obligation upon every Muslim male and female is their (the prayers) safeguarding and performance in the prescribed times with tranquility and serenity.

From the most important obligations for the men is offering the prayer congregationally in Allah's houses in which He has allowed His name to be raised and mentioned as He the Mighty and Sublime has said,

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

"And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât, and Irka' (i.e. bow down or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with ArRaki'ûn." (Al-Baqarah: 43)

He the Mighty and Majestic also said,

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ

"Guard strictly (five obligatory) AsSalawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer 'Asr). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayers)]. "
(Al-Baqarah: 238)

And The Mighty and Majestic said,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ⁽¹⁾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ⁽²⁾

"Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness. "
(Al-Mu'minun: 1-2)

until He said,

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ⁽⁹⁾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ⁽¹⁰⁾
الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ⁽¹¹⁾

"And those who strictly guard their (five compulsory congregational) Salawât (prayers) (at their fixed stated hours). These are indeed the inheritors. Who shall inherit the Firdaus (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever. "
(Al-Mu'minun: 9-11)

The Prophet (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said,

"The covenant which is between us and them is the prayer, for the one who leaves it has indeed disbelieved." [Ahmed, At-Tirmithi, and Ibn Majah]

The most important obligation after the prayer is paying the zakat as Allah the Mighty and Sublime has said,

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ
وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ

"And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allâh, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât) and give Zakât: and that is the right religion." (Al-Baiyinah: 5)

and He said,

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

"And perform AsSalât (IqâmatasSalât), and give Zakât and obey the Messenger (Muhammad) that you may receive mercy (from Allâh)." (An-Nur: 56)

The great book of Allah and the noble way of His messenger have indicated that the one who doesn't pay his zakat will be punished on the day of judgment.

The most important thing after the prayer and the zakat is the fasting of Ramadan, which is one of the five Islamic pillars mentioned in the statement of the Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*),

"Islam is based on (the following) five (principles): To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Apostle, to offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly, to pay Zakat (i.e. obligatory charity) , to perform Hajj. (i.e. Pilgrimage to Mecca), and to observe fast during the month of Ramadan." [Bukhari and Muslim]

It is an obligation upon the Muslim to safeguard his fasting and praying from that which Allah has prohibited both statement and action as the intent behind fasting is obedience to Allah, glory to Him, honoring His

holiness, struggling with the self (soul) against its desires and for its Lord, and accustoming it to patience from what Allah has prohibited.

Its intention is not just leaving off food, drink, and that which breaks the fast; for this there has been authentically reported on the Prophet (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) a statement,

"Fasting is a shield (or a screen or a shelter). So, the person observing fasting should not behave foolishly and impudently, and if somebody fights with him or abuses him, he should tell him twice, 'I am fasting.'" [Al-Bukhari]

It has also been authentically reported that he (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said,

"Whoever does not give up forged speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving off food and drink (i.e. Allah will not accept his fasting.)" [Al-Bukhari]

Consequently, it is known from these texts and others that the obligation upon the one fasting is refraining from all that Allah has prohibited and safeguarding all that which Allah has ordered with, and doing so His forgiveness, freedom from the fire, and acceptance of the fast and prayer is hoped for.

There are things (rulings) which have gone unnoticed by some people. From them, the obligation upon the Muslim to fast faithfully hoping for Allah's reward and not showing off, listening to or blindly following the people, or following the inhabitants of the country, rather it is an obligation that the reason for his fast be his faith that Allah has made this a religious duty and his hope for the reward with his Lord. Likewise praying in Ramadan must be done by the Muslim faithfully hoping in Allah's reward, not for any other reason as he (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) has said,

"He who fasts Ramadan believing in Allah and hoping for His reward, Allah will forgive what has proceeded from his sins, He who stands in prayer in the month of Ramadan believing in Allah and hoping for His reward, Allah will forgive what has proceeded from his sins, and He who stands in prayer on the 'Night of Power' believing in Allah and hoping for His reward, Allah will forgive what has proceeded from his sins." [Bukhari and Muslim]

From the things whose ruling has gone unnoted are that which may afflict the one fasting from a wound, a nosebleed, vomit, or water or gas reaching the back of the throat unintentionally. All of these things do not break the fast except if someone was to induce vomiting then the fast would be broken as from the statement of the Prophet (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*),

"Whoever vomits (naturally) need not make up the fast and whoever induces vomiting must make up the fast." [Ahmed and Ibn Majah]

Also what may occur to the one fasting like delaying the ritual washing from major impurity until the dawn prayer, what occurs to some women such as delaying the washing of menstrual and post partum blood to the dawn prayer if she saw her period or postpartum bleeding to its end before the dawn prayer, it is then an obligation to fast and there is no problem with delaying the washing to after the start of the prayer but it is not permissible to delay it to sunrise, rather it is a must that she wash and pray before sunrise. Likewise the man in a state of sexual impurity, he is not permitted to delay the washing to after sunrise, rather it is a must that he wash and pray the dawn prayer before the sun rises and it is an obligation upon the man to be hasty in order to attend the dawn prayer with the congregation.

From the things that do not break one's fast: blood analysis and needle injection, both for reasons other than seeking nutrition although delaying them to the night is better if that is easy as the Prophet (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said,

"Leave that which is doubtful for that which is not doubtful" [Ahmed, Bukhari, Nisa'i]

and he (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said,

"Whoever saves himself from these suspicious things saves his religion and his honor." [Bukhari]

From the things whose rulings are not unnoticed by the people are: absence of tranquility in the prayer be it obligatory or supererogatory as many true prophetic statements from the Messenger of Allah (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) have reported that tranquility is a pillar from the pillars of the prayer which is not correct with out it. It is stillness in the prayer, awe, and not being quick so that all of the vertebra return to their place. Many people pray the night prayer in Ramadan in a way that is not comprehensible and are not

tranquil in it, rather they take from it so that this prayer in this manner is not whole and the person is sinning not rewarded.

From the things whose ruling may have gone unnoticed to some people is their thinking that it is not permissible to pray less than 20 units in the night prayer (tarawih), and some thinking that it is not to be more than 11 or 13 units. All of this thinking is not in the correct place, rather it is incorrect and in opposition to the evidence.

There are many true prophetic statements of the Messenger of Allah (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) that have shown that the night prayer is vast (in option regarding the number of units) and that there is not a specified limit which is not allowed to oppose, rather it has been firmly reported that he (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) used to pray in the night 11 units, sometimes 13 units, and sometimes he (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) would pray less in Ramadan and in other months. When he (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) was asked about the night prayer he said,

"2 by 2 and if any of you fear the coming of the morning, pray one unit to close what you prayed." [Bukhari and Muslim]

He (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) did not limit the number of units, not in Ramadan and not in other months and because of this the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the time of Umar's leadership prayed 23 units and sometimes prayed 11 units all of which have been firmly reported from Umar and the companions of his time. Some of the predecessors prayed 36 units in Ramadan and closed with 3 odd units, some of them prayed 41 as Shaikhul Islam Ibn Taymiyah and others from the people of knowledge have mentioned. He also mentioned that this affair was vast (in ruling) and that the best was the one who elongated the recitation, bowing and prostration even if the number of units were small in amount and for the one who shortened the recitation, bowing, and prostration then he should increase the number of units, as he, may Allah have mercy upon, has meant.

The one who ponders and reflects over his (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) way would know that the best and preferred from all of this is the prayer with 11 to 13 units in Ramadan and the other months, in agreement with the action of the Prophet (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) in most cases and as this is easier on those praying and closer to obtaining awe and humility. And for the one who increases upon this number then there is no blame upon him or

disapproval as has proceeded.

Likewise, it is better for the one praying with the Imaam in Ramadan not to leave except when he (the prayer leader) leaves as the Prophet (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said,

**"Verily the man who stands with the Imaam until he leaves will have the reward of the whole night in prayer recorded."
[Ahmed and At-Tirmithi]**

And it has be legislated for all of the Muslims to strive hard in the many types of worship in this month such as optional prayers, reading, reflecting, and learning the Quran, praising, hailing, thanking, and glorifying Allah, seeking his forgiveness, supplicating, ordering with good and forbidding the evil, calling others to Allah the Mighty and Sublime, comforting the poor, striving hard towards obeying the parents, enjoining the ties of kinship, being hospitable to the neighbors, visiting the sick, and performing the many other acts of good and virtue as he (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said in a previous prophetic statement,

"...Allah looks upon your competition (for his sake to do good deeds) in Him and His angels are boastful of you thusly showing Allah goodness from yourselves, for indeed the miserable one is he whom the mercy of Allah has been prohibited." [Al-Kabeer lit-Tabarany]

Also what has been reported from him (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*),

"Whoever draws near to Allah in it (Ramadan) with good habits and practices, it is as if he has offered (fulfilled) an obligatory action in other than it (Ramadan), and the one who fulfills an obligatory action it is as if he has performed 70 obligatory actions in other than Ramadan." [Ibn Khuzaimah]

Also, as he (*sall>Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said in a true prophetic statement,

**"Umrah (the lesser pilgrimage) in Ramadan is equal to the pilgrimage to Mecca or he said the pilgrimage to Mecca with me."
[Bukhari and Muslim]**

The prophetic statements and sayings of the companions which elude to the legislated rivalry and competition involving the many types of good and virtue in Ramadan are many.

Allah is the one whom is asked to give us and all of the Muslims success in all that contains His pleasure, to accept our fasting and praying, to correct our situation and to protect all of us from the deception of trial and tribulation, just as we ask Him, the Glorified, to make right and guide the leader of the Muslims and to join us together upon the truth for verily He is the keeper of that and fully capable of doing so. May the peace, mercy, and blessing of Allah be upon you.