

# Fasting During Ramadan

By Sheikh Muhammad Saalih Al `Uthaimeen (May Allah have mercy on him)

## First Sermon

Praise be to Allah. We praise him and seek His help and forgiveness. We turn to Him in repentance. We seek Allah's protection from the evils of our souls and our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides can never be misguided and whoever misguided by Allah can never be guided. I testify that there is no god but Allah, with Whom there is no associate. I testify that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. May Allah bless him, his family, his Companions, and those who will follow them until the Day of Resurrection.

O people! Praise Allah and thank Him for what He has granted you of blessed seasons, blessings and gifts. Observe these seasons with due care by performing obligations and good deeds and by avoiding prohibitions and sinful acts. These times are but to obliterate sins, to increase good deeds and to lift people in ranks.

O worshippers of Allah! You are witnessing a blessed month and great season in which Allah guides us to the good deeds. *Ramadan* is the (month) in which Qur'an was sent down, as clear guidance and judgment to all people. It the month in which good deeds are multiplied and sins are ranked grave. This is a month, the first part of which brings Allah's Mercy, the middle of which brings Allah's forgiveness and the last part of which brings emancipation from Hellfire, and in which a night is better than one thousand months. Allah has enjoined fasting during the day as a pillar of *Islam* and made the prayer during the night voluntary to complete other obligations. If anyone observes fasting believing in its obligation and anticipating its

reward, all his previous sins are obliterated. Anyone who observes 'Umrah, his 'Umrah is equal to the reward of pilgrimage. In this month, the gates of paradise are opened and faithful people increase good deeds. The gates of Hell are shut and sinful acts reduced. Devils are chained, so they are no longer be able to affect faithful people as they do in other times.

O people! You should start fasting in the month of *Ramadan* on seeing the crescent of the month of *Ramadan*. Do not precede *Ramadan* by fasting a day or two before it as the Prophet was reported to have ordered his companions not to fast on such days unless it is a day in which the person usually fasts like the *Sunnah* of fasting Monday and Thursday, then if the day before *Ramadan* happens to be Monday or Thursday, he is allowed to fast such days. He is also allowed to fast on these days if he has to make up missed days in the previous month of *Ramadan*. You should not also fast the day of doubt (the thirtieth day of *Sha'aban*) if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it). Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar: Allah's Apostle (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) mentioned *Ramadan* and said, "**Do not fast unless you see the crescent (of Ramadan), and do not give up fasting till you see the crescent (of Shawwal), but if the sky is overcast (if you cannot see it), then act on estimation** (i.e. count *Sha'aban* as thirty days).<sup>1</sup> Narrated Abu Hurairah: The Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) said, "**Start fasting on seeing the crescent (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the crescent (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete thirty days of Sha'aban**". 'Ammar bin Yasser said that who fasts the day of doubt is regarded as disobedient to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*). Anyone who sees the crescent of the month of *Ramadan* should tell the responsible persons about it. If the concerned responsible persons announce seeing the crescent of *Ramadan*, you should start fasting, and if they announce seeing the crescent of *Shawwal*, you should give up fasting because their announcement is a proof that should be relied upon. It was also reported that a man came to the Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) and told him that he saw the crescent, thereupon the Prophet said: "**Do you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah? Yes, the man replied. The Prophet said: O Bilal! Call on the people and tell them to start fasting tomorrow**".

Fasting during the month of *Ramadan* is one of the rites of *Islam* and made as an obligation by Allah and anyone who does not believe in its obligation is regarded as a disbeliever because he denies the command of Allah and His Messenger (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) and goes against the consensus of Muslims. Almighty Allah says which translates as: ***“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint,”*** (*Al-Baqarah: 183*) and ***“Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also Clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful”***(*Al-Baqarah: 185*).

Fasting is obligatory upon every sane healthy *Muslim*, who is not traveling at that time, whether man or woman unless she is in menstruation period or having post-childbirth bleeding. Fasting is not obligatory upon a non-Muslim and if he embraces *Islam* during the month of *Ramadan*, he is not obliged to make up the previous days of the month. As to the day on which he converts, he should fast till the end of the day with other people and is not obliged to make up this day. Fasting is not due upon minors but if they can tolerate fasting, they should fast to get use to its hardships. The companions of the Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) used to encourage their children to observe fasting and when they weep out of hunger and thirst, they gave them toys to play with it until sunset. The young boy becomes an adult by three features. The first of which is to reach the age of fifteen and the second is seeing the pubic hair and the third is seeing the sperm during a ‘wet dream’ or by any other method. In addition to these conditions, which are applied to the boy, the girl becomes an adult when she experiences menstruation. Fasting becomes obligatory by meeting any of the previous conditions.

As to the insane and feeble-minded person, fasting is not obligatory and s/he is not obliged to make up any days or to pay ransom, nor s/he is required to

observe purification or prayer because of his/her inability to understand what they are doing. Fasting is not obligatory upon those who are totally unable to fast like the elderly and chronically ill people but they are obliged to feed one poor person (*Miskin*) a day (for every day of fasting that they do not observe), a quarter of *sa'a* for every day, i.e. for every four days a *sa'a* for four poor persons. It is better to provide some fatty ingredients and shortening with barley. If the person is not chronically ill and can tolerate fasting and no harm results, then he must fast. If he can fast but difficulty in fasting and there is some harm, fasting is disliked. If some harm is the consequence of fasting, it is prohibited to observe fasting in such a case. On recovering, he should make up all missed days but if he died, nothing is required. As for the Pregnant and breast-feeding women, if they fear for themselves or for the baby, both are allowed to break their fast and to make up missed days afterwards.

As for the traveler, if he intends his traveling only as a concession for him to break his fast, fasting is obligatory. However, in the case where he travels not to enjoy the concession, fasting is optional i.e. he is allowed to break his fast and to make up the days he missed and he is also allowed to observe fasting. If fasting and breaking fast are equal to him, observing fast is better than breaking the fast because it was the tradition of the Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) and faster in terms of observing the obligation and easier than making up the missed days. If fasting will result in hardships because of traveling, scholars disliked fasting. If traveling results in grave hardships, fasting is held prohibited because when the Messenger of Allah left for *Makkah* during the year of the conquest [of *Makkah*] and he (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) and the people with him fasted until he reached a certain valley. He was told that the people were experiencing hardship fasting while traveling. He then called for a cup of water, which he elevated so that the people could see it, and then he drank. Afterwards, he was told that some people had continued to fast, and he said: ***“Those are disobedient ones, those are disobedient ones.”*** This ruling is applied whether he travels for a need or it is continuous travel during the whole year like taxi drivers or other cars that go out of their cities. They enjoy the same concession granted to the traveler like breaking the fast and shortening obligatory prayers. If breaking fast is preferred as it is easier than fasting then they must make up all the days they missed. When those people are out of their original cities, they are regarded as travelers and consequently are subject to the same

rulings. If one travels during the day, it is preferred to complete the day in fast, but if he faces hardships, he is allowed to break his fast then he must make up the fast afterwards. There is no specific period for traveling, so it does not matter if the period is long or short as long as he is out of his country and it is not for the sake of escaping the obligation of fasting. In case the intention is for the latter, he is not allowed to break his fast because fasting is one of Allah's obligations, which cannot be given up based on whimsical reasons.

Fasting is not obligatory on women during menses and post-childbirth bleeding and isn't accepted from them except after purification even if a moment before the dawn then she must fast that day. They must make up missed days.

O Muslims! The Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) exhorted us to perform night prayer in this month as he is reported to have said: ***“Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan, believing in its obligation and anticipating its reward, will have his previous sins forgiven.”*** *Tarawih* prayer is a part of night prayer, so observe it in the proper way with your *Imam* and never leave him until he finishes it because whoever performs night prayer with the *Imam* until he finishes it, he is rewarded with the reward of a full night prayer even if he is on his bed. On the other hand, the *Imams* should fear Allah while performing the night prayer by performing it in a tranquil way to let those who behind them get the pleasure of approaching Allah and they should not be hasty like the movement of the raven, the way which make the *Imam* and those behind him lose the true benefit and spirit of such prayers. Almighty Allah says which translates as: ***“Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also Clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you in difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful”*** (*Al-Mulk: 2*)

The Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) who is the most eager one among people in performing good deeds and is the role-model in approaching Allah and the reward of the Last Day, used to perform night prayer whether in *Ramadan* or in any other month with eleven *Rak'at* and no more. *Ibn Abbas* reported in *Sahih Muslim* that the Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) performed night prayer with the companions during the month of *Ramadan* then he stopped it least they should think it obligatory and be unable to perform it. *'Umar ibn Al Khattab* was reported to have ordered *Ubay Ibn Ka`ab* and *Tamim Al-Daary* to lead the people in night prayer in eleven *Rak'at*. The Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) used to perform it with this number and was followed by the second guided caliph, *'Umar ibn Al Khattab*. This is the preferred number but if anyone wants it to be more, he is allowed to unless he intends to go against the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. To be hasty while performing it is disliked because it makes it void of the intended spirit and benefit with regard to both the *Imam* and those behind him. May Allah guide you and I to spend our time worshiping Him, guard us against sins and evil, guide us to the right path and save us from the path of Hellfire, and be among those who fast *Ramadan* believing in Allah and anticipating His Reward as He is Most Generous.

## Second Sermon

Praise be to Allah Who has explained the lawful and unlawful things for His servants and ordained for them limits that are clear and beyond any doubt or confusion. I testify that there is no god worthy of worship than Allah with whom there is no associate. To Him belongs the kingdom and He is the Great and the most High. I testify that Muhammad (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa*

*Sallam*) is His Servant and Messenger. Among His worshipers he is the most righteous and sincere one in both sayings and deeds. May Allah bless him, his family, his companions and those who will follow them until the Day of Judgment.

O people! Fear Allah and thank Him for the bounty of clarifying the rules of religion. Be always obedient and righteous which was the life of all prophets and messengers. Almighty Allah has prescribed obligations, which you should not neglect, and ordained limits, which you should not go beyond. Among the obligations which Allah has prescribed and explained its rulings, is fasting, which is one of the pillars of *Islam*. Allah has informed us about the signs by which fasting during the month of *Ramadan* is to begin and end and when we start and end fasting on every day during the month. As to the start of the month, Almighty Allah says: ***“Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur’an, as a guide to mankind, also Clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful.”*** (Al-Baqarah: 185)

In this regard the Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) said: ***“Start fasting on seeing the crescent (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the crescent (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete thirty days of Sha’aban.”*** As to the day, Almighty Allah says which translates as: ***“ Permitted to you, on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and ye are their garments. Allah knoweth what ye used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you; so now associate with them, and seek what Allah hath ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are limits (set by) Allah: approach***

*not nigh thereto. Thus doth Allah make clear His Signs to men: that they may learn self-restraint.” (Al-Baqarah: 187).*

So when the time of the dawn begins and the people know that whether by hearing the caller to prayer or by any other way, the day begins and people must observe fasting till sunset. In this regard the Prophet was reported to have said to his companions: *“Bilal would pronounce Adhan (at the fag end of the night in order to inform the people about the time of the Suhur). So you eat and drink till you hear the Adhan of Ibn Umm Maktum (which was pronounced at the conclusion of the Suhur and the commencement of the fast) who didn’t call the Adhan except at the time of dawn”* He also added, *“When the night comes from this side, pointing to east, and the day leaves from this side, pointing to the west and sun sets, then the fasting person is allowed to break his fast”*

**O people! The things that invalidate the fast are seven:**

**The first** is to have sexual intercourse, which is grievous action during fasting. Whoever performs sexual intercourse during the day of *Ramadan* is subject to expiation. At first he must set free a slave and if he could not, he must observe fasting during two consecutive months. If he could not fast, he must provide food for sixty poor persons.

**The second** thing that voids fast is ejaculating sperms intentionally even if it was just due to kissing, hugging, or masturbation or by any other way. If it is due to a ‘wet dream’, it does not invalidate the fast because he is sleeping and not responsible for what happen during sleep.

**The third** is the intentional eating and drink, be it lawful or unlawful, harmful or good, or through the mouth or the nose. The Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) said: ***“Exaggerate when rinsing your nose unless you are fasting.”*** This indicates that whatever enters through the nose is like the mouth. As regards smell, it does not invalidate fasting because it has no volume that may enter the body.

**The fourth** is that which takes the rule of food like injection used for feeding because it is used instead of eating and drinking. If it is not used for the sake of feeding like medicine, it does not invalidate the fast whether intravenous or underneath the skin because it is not like food and drink.

**The fifth** is cupping because the Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) said: ***“The fast of both the cupper and the cupped is invalid”***. The fast is not vitiated by the nosebleed because it is not an intentional act. Bleeding resulted from uprooting the teeth does not invalidate the fast; s/he should not swallow the blood because it is prohibited during fasting or at any time. The fast is also not invalidated by the blood resulted from wounds. However, taking blood from a person to be injected into another person invalidates the fast because it harms the former like cupping. If the second person is in a dire need for the blood and cannot wait until sunset, the fasting person is allowed to break his fast and give his blood to him but he must make up this missed day.

**The sixth** thing, which invalidates a fast, is intentional vomiting. If he vomits intentionally, his fast is invalid but if he vomits unintentionally, his fast is still intact. In this regard the Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) said: ***“Whoever is overcome and vomits is not to make up the day and whoever vomits intentionally must make up the day.”***

Fasting is invalidated by the previous causes only when the person is knowledgeable of them. If he is ignorant or eats, drinks, or has intercourse, thinking that the sun has set or that *Fajr* has not occurred, the fast is sound

and there is no need to make up the fast on a such day. Almighty Allah says: *“Call them by (the names of) their fathers: that is more just in the sight of Allah. But if ye know not their father's (names, call them) your Brothers in Faith, or your Mawalikum (freed slaves). But there is no blame on ye if ye make a mistake therein: (what counts is) the intention of your hearts: and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”* (Al-Ahzab: 5).

In *Sahih Al-Bukhari* Asma bint Abi Bakr said, "We broke our fast during the lifetime of the Prophet on a cloudy day and then the sun appeared and she didn't mention that the Prophet (Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) ordered them to make up that day". If he knows that the sun has not yet set, he must stop breaking the fast but in case he does not give eating and drinking, his fast is invalid. The fast is not invalid if one forgets that he is fasting as Almighty Allah says: *“On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray:) "Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which Thou didst lay on those before us; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; help us against those who stand against Faith.”* (Al-Baqarah: 286). The Prophet (Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) said: *“Whoever forgets he is fasting, and eats or drinks is to complete his fast, as it was Allah who fed him and gave him something to drink.”* Once he remembers that he is fasting, he must give up eating and drinking and if he continues, his fast is invalid even if he swallows what in his mouth only. If anyone noticed anyone eating or drinking, he should remind him as means of cooperating with each other in what is good and righteous. The fast is not invalidated by anything that might enter his stomach unintentionally when rinsing the mouth or the nose.

**The seventh** thing that invalidates the fast is menstruation and post-childbirth bleeding even if a moment just before sunset. If she feels it before sunset and the blood does not appear before sunset, her fast is sound.

It is permissible to apply kohl and eye drops or eardrops while fasting. It is also permissible to heal wounds and to smell perfumes but s/he should not sniff frankincense to let it enter his/her body. It is also permissible to apply things that might calm his thirst like the wetting of his clothes. In this regard *Imam Malik reported that some companions of the Prophet (Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) saw the prophet pouring water upon his head out of thirst while fasting.* It was also reported that *Ibn ‘Umar wetted his clothes and wore it.* It is permissible to the fasting person to use the tooth stick at the beginning of the day and its end because it is the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*Salla Allahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*). It is recommended to use it before prayer, ablution, getting up and when entering the home. The *Sunnah* is to break the fast by eating ripe dates or dry dates and any food if dates are not available and any drink if food is not available. If the sun has set and he is in a place where there is nothing to break the fast, he should intend breaking the fast but not sucking the finger like some ignorant people.

O Muslims! Keep your fast away from obscenity, falsehood and its application because whoever does not abandon falsehood and its application and foolish behavior, Allah will be in no need that he abandons food and drink. Perform the obligatory prayers in the regular times in congregational manner. Perform as much prayer, remembrance of Allah, reciting the Holy Qur’an and give charity as you can. Beware of all that Allah has prohibited you to do like backbiting, cheating, telling lies and vain speech and foul language and if one of you is being cursed or annoyed, he should say, I am fasting. Be on guard against listening to music from the radio or any other means because fasting, in the first place, is a guard against sins to escape the Hellfire. Whoever commits prohibitions and neglects obligations during fast, his reward will be subject to reduction. ***“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint,”*** (*Al-Baqarah: 183*)

May Allah guide us to get the blessings of the holy Qur’an.

Summary

- 1) Taking advantage of seasons of worship, and thanking Allah for grating them.
- 2) Some of the virtues of *Ramadan*.
- 3) Receiving *Ramadan*, and the ruling on fasting the day of doubt.
- 4) The obligation of fasting in *Ramadan*.
- 5) Those who are excused from fasting, and their rules.
- 6) Encouragement to perform *Qiaam* (night prayer) in *Ramadan*, and its etiquettes.
- 7) Things that nullify the fast, and the ruling on one who does any of it unintentionally.
- 8) Things allowed during fast.
- 9) Protecting ones fast from those things which nullify it, and from those acts that would decrease the reward