

# VIRTUES OF FASTING

## Fasting in Ramadan is one of the pillars of Islam:

The Two Sahihs recorded that Ibn `Umar [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] said that the Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said,

(Islam is built upon five (pillars): Testifying that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing the prayer, giving Zakah, fasting Ramadan and Hajj to the House.) (Bukhari and Muslim)

## Fasting is obligatory in Ramadan:

Narrated Talha bin Ubaidullah: A bedouin with unkempt hair came to Allah's Messenger [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] and said, "O Allah's Messenger [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam]! Inform me what Allah has made compulsory for me as regards As-Salat (the prayer)." He replied: "You have to offer perfectly the five compulsory Salat in a day and night (24 hours), unless you want to pray Nawafil (optional)." The bedouin further asked, "Inform me what Allah has made compulsory for me as regards fasting." He replied, "You have to observe Saum (fast) during the whole month of Ramadan, unless you want to fast more as Nawafil." The bedouin further asked, "Tell me how much Zakat Allah has enjoined on me." Thus, Allah's Messenger [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] informed him about all the laws (i.e. fundamentals) of Islam. The bedouin then said, "By Him Who has honored you, I will neither perform any Nawafil nor will I decrease what Allah has enjoined on me." Allah's Messenger [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "If he is saying the truth, he will succeed (or he will be granted Paradise)." [Bukhari]

## virtue of fasting:

1. From the beginning of Ramadan, gates of Jannah (Paradise) are opened, the gates of Hell are closed:

Abu Hurairah [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] reported: The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "[When Ramadan begins, the gates of Jannah are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained.](#)" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

**Commentary:** This is a special distinction of the month of Ramadan during which Muslims become more inclined towards the worship of Allah. They pay greater attention to the recitation of the Qur'an, remembrance of Allah, worship, and seeking pardon for sins.

## **2.'Umra in Ramadan is equal to Hajj (in reward):**

To Narrated Ata: I heard Ibn 'Abbas [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] saying, "Allah's Apostle [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] asked an Ansari woman (Ibn 'Abbas named her but 'Ata' forgot her name), 'What prevented you from performing Hajj with us?' She replied, 'We have a camel and the father of so-and-so and his son (i.e. her husband and her son) rode it and left one camel for us to use for irrigation.'

He said (to her), 'Perform 'Umra when Ramadan comes, [for 'Umra in Ramadan is equal to Hajj \(in reward\),](#)' or said something similar."

Narrated Umm Sanaan Al-Ansariyah [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with her]: The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said to a woman "Perform Umrah when Ramadan comes, for Umrah in Ramadan is equal to Hajj (in reward)." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

In another version, with Al-Bukhari; Allah's Messenger [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said to her: ".....as it is equal to Hajj with me (in reward)." (Al-Bukhari)

## **3.The Saum (fast) will intercede for the servant on the Day of Judgement:**

'Abdullaah Ibn 'Amr [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] reported that the Messenger of Allaah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said: "[The fast and the Qur'aan will intercede for the servant on the Day of Judgement. The fast will say: 'My Lord, I restricted him from food and](#)

drink, so allow me to intercede for him.' And the Qur'aan will say: 'I prevented him from sleeping at night, so allow me to intercede for him.' So they will be allowed to intercede." Saheeh Muslim

### 5. Abundant reward for fasting:

Abu Hurairah [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] reported: The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "Allah the Exalted and Majestic said: `Every act of the son of Adam is for him, except As-Siyam (the fasting) which is (exclusively) for Me, and I will reward him for it.' Fasting is a shield. When anyone of you is observing fast, he should neither indulge in obscene language nor should he raise his voice; and if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him, he should say: `I am fasting.' By Him in Whose Hand the soul of Muhammad is, the breath of one observing Saum is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk. The one who fasts, experiences two joys: he feels pleasure when he breaks the fast. He is joyful by virtue of his fast when he meets his Rubb.'" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

In a narration by Al-Bukhari, the Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "Allah says: `(The person observing Saum) has abstained from food and drink, and sexual pleasures for My sake; fasting is for Me, and I will bestow its reward. Every good deed has ten times its reward'."

In a narration by Muslim, the Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "The reward of every (good) deed of a person is multiplied from ten to seven hundred times. Allah (SWT) says: `The reward of observing Saum is different from the reward of other good deeds; Saum is for Me, and I Alone will give its reward. The person observing Saum abstains from food and drink only for My sake.' The fasting person has two joyous occasions, one at the time of breaking his fast, and the other at the time of meeting his Rubb. Surely, the breath of one observing Saum is better smelling to Allah than the fragrance of musk.'"

**Commentary:** "Khuluf", is the smell that comes from the mouth of person who observes Saum. It results from the thirst and hunger

which he has to suffer during the Saum. The Hadith not only tells us the merits of Saum but also brings into focus the true significance of it. Saum is not thus mere abstention from food, drink and sexual intercourse, but also keeping away from all evils and vices and embracing virtues.

#### **6.Those who fast for them there is a gate in Paradise called "ar-Rayyaan":**

Abu Hurairah [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] reported: The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "He who spends a pair in the way of Allah will be called from the gates of Jannah: `O slave of Allah! This gate is better for you' and one who is constant in Salat (prayer), will be called from the Gate of Salat; and whoever is eager in fighting in the Cause of Allah, will be called from the Gate of Jihad; and who is regular in observing Saum will be called from Ar-Raiyan Gate. The one who is generous in charity will be called from the Gate of Charity.'" Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "O Messenger of Allah (PBUH)! May my mother and father be sacrificed for you! Those who are called from these gates will stand in need of nothing. Will anybody be called from all of those gates?" He replied, "Yes, and I hope that you will be one of them.'" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

**Commentary:** "Pair" means two; in other channels of transmission, it has been explained thus: "They asked him, `Pair of what?' He [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, `A pair of horses, cows or camels'." "Pair" in this Hadith, however, can be all-inclusive; i.e., fasting two days or performing two prayers, etc. This Hadith also mentions special distinction of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him) and the esteem in which he was held by the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam]. It also transpires from this Hadith that one can praise such a person right on his face about whom one does not fear that it will make him proud. This Hadith has also an inducement for giving in Sadaqah two instead of a single item.

Sahl bin Sa`d [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] said the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "In Jannah there is a gate which is called Ar-Raiyan through which only those who observe Saum (fasting) will

enter on the Day of Resurrection. None else will enter through it. It will be called out, "Where are those who observe fasting?" So they will stand up and proceed towards it. When the last of them will have entered, the gate will be closed and then no one will enter through that gate.'

[Muslim].

**Commentary:** This Hadith tells us about the special distinction of those who observe Saum. "Only those who observe Saum" signify the faithful who not only observe Saum during the month of Ramadan but also frequently observe voluntary fasts over and above the obligatory ones, otherwise Saum of Ramadan are compulsory for every Muslim. Similar is the case of the people of Salat, people of Sadaqah and people of Jihad, who have been mentioned in the preceding Ahadith otherwise all Muslims are on par so far as the Salat, Sadaqah, etc., are concerned.

#### **7. Who observes Saum (fasting) for one day for the sake of Allah, Allah will draw his face farther from Hell-fire:**

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] reported: The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "Every slave of Allah who observes Saum (fasting) for one day for the sake of Allah, Allah will draw his face farther from Hell-fire to the extent of a distance to be covered in seventy years.'

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

**Commentary:** "Every slave of Allah" includes men, women, the free and the unfree, because they are slaves of Allah. The Hadith highlights the excellence of fasting for the sake of Allah which will serve, on the Day of Resurrection, as shield against Hell-fire.

#### **8. Whoever observed fast in Ramadan out of sincere faith (that it is an enjoined duty), and hoping for a reward from Allah and with honest intention(i.e., only for Allah's sake):**

Abu Hurairah [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him]:( reported: The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "He who observes fasting during the month of Ramadan with Faith while seeking its reward from Allah, will have his past sins forgiven.'" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

**9. In the month of Ramadan, every night, Some are freed from Hell by Allah:**

Narrated AbuHurayrah [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him]:Allah's Messenger [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "When the first night of Ramadan comes, the devils and the rebellious jinn are chained, the gates of Hell are locked and not one of them is opened; the gates of Paradise are opened and not one of them is locked; and a crier calls, 'You who desire what is good, come forward, and you who desire evil, refrain.' Some are freed from Hell by Allah, and that happens every night." Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah transmitted it, and Ahmad transmitted it from a man. Tirmidhi said this is a gharib tradition.

**10. The fasting person will be among the true followers of the prophets and the martyrs:**

`Amr ibn Murrah al-Juhaanee [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] said: "A man came to the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, what if I testify that none has the right to worshipped but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah, and I observe the five daily prayers, and I pay the zakaah, and I fast and stand in prayer in Ramadhan, then amongst whom shall I be?' He said: 'Amongst the true followers of the prophets and the martyrs.'" [Ibn Hibbaan, Saheeh]

**11. There is no equivalent to Fasting:**

Abu Umamah [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] reported: "I came to the Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] and said: 'Order me to do a deed that will allow me to enter Paradise.' He said: 'Stick to fasting, as there is no equivalent to it.'" Then I came to him again and he said: 'Stick to fasting.'" This hadith is related by Ahmad, an-Nasa'i, and al-Hakim who classified it as sahih.

References:

1. Al-Bukhari :Name of book of Hadith, which is known for its authenticity and correctness.
2. Riyadh-us-Saliheen; Abu Zakariya Yahya bin Sharaf an-nuwai damishqi
3. Tirmidhi (Name of book of Hadith)

**Footnote (Explanation) :**

SAAW: Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam, i.e. the Salat of Allah and His Salaam (Peace) be upon Prophet Muhammad. The Salat of Allah upon Prophet Muhammad is His Praise and mentioning of the Prophet to the angels in the Most High place in Heaven.