

Lesson 18: Fasting–A Great Act of Worship

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Fasting is one of the great Islamic acts of worship. Allah loves those who fast and rewards them in the best manner.

Every Muslim must fast in the month of Ramadhan that is from just before sunrise until sunset he must not eat or drink. {He must also not do other things which would break the fast}.

When we want to fast we must make the "Niyat" (the intention to fast). This means that we make the decision to fast at the order of the All-Aware Allah.

Allah has made fasting compulsory that:

Muslims will remember Allah, and know themselves better and have better control over themselves. So that they will remember the Day of Judgement more often. So that they will do good deeds and prepare themselves for their own future and store up good works for themselves. So that they will taste hunger and thirst and think of those people who are hungry and thirsty and help them. To practice thirst and bear hunger ... Imam Jafar Sadiq said: "The person who only abstains from eating and drinking, will not be counted among those who fasted," meaning that, in order to truly fast, not eating and not drinking is not enough.

Perhaps it is that, when you are fasting, your ears, eyes and tongue should also be too, i.e. they shouldn't do anything 'Hararn' (unlawful). Your hands and feet, and all your other bodily organs should also fast, that is, not carry out any sinful act, in order for your fast to be accepted.

When you are fasting, you should be better and better behaved than on other days. Stop your tongue from uttering vain words, don't lie, and don't make fun of, or argue with anyone. You must also not stir up jealousy by speaking ill of people or picking fault with them. With harder work than usual, be kind and try not to do bad deeds.

For those boys and girls who have reached puberty and for whom fasting will not do them any harm, it is compulsory for them to fast in the month of Ramadhan.

Younger children also can participate in the ceremony of 'Sahar ' in the month of Ramadhan with the rest of the family. They can eat 'Sahar' and then not eat until noon, or as long as they can abstain. In this manner they can share in the divine spiritual rewards of those who fast.

Anybody who breaks his fast without a good reason commits a sin. Afterwards, he must make up his fast, and to pay for his sin he must repent and for every day that he failed to fast he must fast for sixty days, or feed sixty poor people.

Looking after guests for 'Eftar' is one of the best things we can do during the month of Ramadhan. The Prophet of Islam declared: "Anyone who gives 'Eftar ' to a fasting person will be included with those who will receive the mercy of Allah."

One of the companions of the Prophet said: "Oh Prophet! We don't all have the means to do this". The Prophet declared: "If you can't, then give the fasting person half a date, and I or a bowl of water."

Think And Answer

1. What is the aim of fasting? When we want to fast, what intention should we have?
2. For what sort of work should we prepare ourselves when we fast? Why?
3. How does a fasting person, come to think about the hungry and poor people? What does he do?
4. How does a fasting person overcome his desires?
5. When fasting, what must be avoided? What must be done in order for a person's fast to be accepted by Allah? How should fasting be done?
6. If someone fails to fast for no religiously acceptable reason, how can he compensate for this great sin?
7. In what season does the month of Ramadhan occur? This year how old are you? Is fasting compulsory upon you? So far, how many days have you fasted? Have you done all the things which are necessary for the acceptance of your fast?

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