

## The First Day of Ramadan February 28, 2025

**Yâ eyyuhâllezîne âmenû kutibe aleykumus siyâmu kemâ kutibe allellezîne min kablikum leallekum tettekûn(tettekûne) Sadaqallahulazim. (Surah Baqarah, 183)**

Allah Most High says: "Oh you who believe, fasting is prescribed to you, as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may learn patience."

Today is the best day of the week; it is Friday, and tonight inshallah we will be delivered to the best of the months, the month of Ramadan. This is the month when the Quran began to be revealed to Rasulallah (saws). In the verse Allah-u Ta'ala is directly addressing the believers, not through the Prophet. He says, "Ya Ayyuhal lazhina adhina Amanu- Oh you who believe" When Allah-u Ta'ala directly addresses us, we are compelled to listen and follow His commands with every part of our being, much like when He asked us, "Am I not your Lord?" before creation. In honor of the month of Ramadan Allah-u Ta'ala prescribed for us a transforming spiritual practice from His Divine Pharmacy, which is called siyam, fasting, as He prescribed it to other believers before us .

The Prophet Adam (as), the Prophet Ibrahim (as), the Prophet Sulayman (as) reportedly fasted three days every month. The Prophet Dawud's (as) fasting was fasting one day and not fasting the next, which is known as the "fast of Dawud." The people of Nineveh, advised by the Prophet Yunus (as) to prevent disaster, fasted for relief from their great trouble and suffering. The Prophet Yahya (as), John the Baptist, is said to have emphasized the importance of fasting as a form of devotion and repentance to the Israelites. Both the Prophet Zachariah (ra) and Hd. Maryam (as), the mother of Hd. Isa (as), are noted for having practiced fasting through silence. The Prophet Moses (as) engaged in an extended fast, abstaining for a period of forty days. The forty-day fast observed by Hd. Isa, (ra), is recognized as part of the traditions of fasting that existed before the advent of Islam. All the religious texts and traditions highlight the significance of fasting in the context of spiritual preparation and reflection.

According to a hadith of Rasulallah (saws), "When Ramadan enters, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hellfire are closed and the devils are chained." So fasting is like a shield from Hellfire. As the shields protect us in the battlefield, fasting protects us from the delusions of Shaytan-i Lain, who tries to creep into us through our faculties when they are opened unconsciously. This life is a battlefield and we need protection from the temptations of Shaytan-i Lain. Fasting provides such a protection.

Allah-u Ta'ala promises that many believers who are fasting will be freed from the hellfire, and will be destined for paradise during the month of Ramadan. That is the meaning of the gates of Paradise will be open starting from day one until the end. The promise continues as the believing servants of Allah will not be destined for the hellfire, as

the gates will be locked, because their likelihood to be destined for hell will be diminished with fasting

We must understand that every prescription of Islam has an outward meaning and a deeper inner meaning. The outer meaning of fasting is to give up eating, drinking and sexual intimacy between dawn and sunset. In reality, fasting is not only practiced by abstention from food and drink and sexual intimacy, but it is practiced by all of our faculties. Fasting with the whole of the physical being is a sign of faith.

Rasulallah (saws) said "Fasting is half of patience and patience is half of faith." Fasting is one fourth of faith, in which there is no hypocrisy. Fasting consists of voluntarily depriving oneself from the pleasures of this world. One should fast with the tongue, with the ears, with eyes, with the hands— in short with the whole physical being. The tongue should be kept from lying, gossiping, or slander, and the ears should stop listening to these heedless conversations. The eye should be kept from what is forbidden, from viewing the world in the usual unconscious manner. The ego should be kept from its usual ambition, lust, anger and arrogance.

Rasulallah (saws) said : "The one who fasts becomes beautified by the attributes of Allah." Inshallah, fasting will purify our hearts from the concerns of this world: ambition, envy, miserliness, and so many other negative qualities. Fasting will open the door of heedfulness and contemplation, and cure the ills of impatience and unthankfulness. While fasting keeps our body hungry, it feeds our hearts with His divine light when we show patience for the sake of Allah, and fasting removes the dirt from the mirror of our souls, where the secrets of Allah reflect and are shared with us

Fasting is for the believing servants of Allah. Allah has rendered fasting obligatory for human beings, not for animals. How can we claim that the ones who do not eat and drink the whole day, but break the hearts of people with what they say, who cannot control their tongues, are really fasting? Breaking hearts, causing pain, destroying, are not the qualities of human beings, but the qualities of animal-self.

Fasting is a form of personal worship that is practiced solely for the sake of Allah. Unlike the five daily prayers, paying zakat, or performing the pilgrimage of hajj, fasting is a hidden act of worship, visible only to Allah. It is hidden from anyone else except Allah-hu ta'ala. This is because fasting involves abstaining from actions, rather than performing them. Allah has concealed the practice of fasting to ensure that its sincerity remains pure and untainted. Allah-u Ta'ala has stated that He Himself will provide the reward for fasting. Although He is the provider of all rewards, this specific emphasis signifies that if Allah decides to grant a reward for fasting, there is no power that can revoke it. Even the sins one may have accumulated cannot diminish the reward of fasting. Fasting is such a special form of worship that it is accepted even when it is done while we sleep.

Inshallah Ramadan will unite us not only around iftar tables for fast breaking and at nights performing tarawih prayers, but throughout the month and the year as well. The blessings of Ramadan are endless. Every good action is rewarded abundantly. Rasulallah

(saws) said, "Whoever provides food for a fasting person to break his fast with, then for him is the same reward as the fasting person's, without anything being diminished from the reward of the fasting person."

Inshallah, every night during Ramadan, we will hear the call of our Lord: ““Ask for something from Me so that I may give it to you. Repent, so that I may readily forgive you. Wish for My Mercy so that I will cover you with My Mercy!”

Ramadan Mubarak. May we have the opportunity to reshape our lives, break our habits, may Ramadan bring peace and salvation to our brothers and sisters who are suffering all around the world.

**Yurdaer al Latif al Jerrahi**