

RAMADAN

THE THREE HOLY MONTHS OF
RAJAB, SHA'BAN, RAMADAN
ON FASTING, PRAYER AND
OTHER MATTERS

COMPILED BY
AMINA 'ADIL

رمضان كريم



SPOHR

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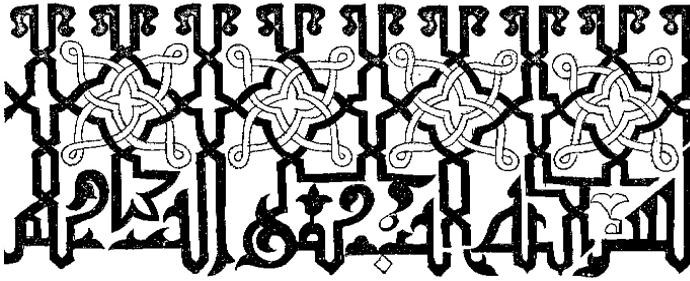
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Love of Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ

WHOOEVER LOVES ALLAH will remember Him often, and Allah will remember the one who loves Him with Grace and Mercy. He will lead him into Paradise in the company of His prophets and saints, and will grant him the vision of His Divine Majesty.

Whoever loves the Holy Prophet ﷺ often recites prayers of praise upon him. This will turn into a blessing for him, it will become as a tree laden with fruit. He will become deserving of the Holy Prophet's intercession and enter into Paradise in his company.

According to the Holy Prophet's eminent companion ANAS, may Allah be pleased with him, the Holy Prophet – peace and blessings be upon him – once said: “Whoever loves my *sunna* (usage, example), he loves me as well; and whoever loves me will be together with me in Paradise.”

IBN ‘ABBĀS – may Allah be pleased with him – relates that the Holy Prophet said: “Whoever upholds one act of my *sunna* at the time when my nation will be in decline, will receive the

reward of one hundred martyrs.” His companions then asked him: “O Prophet of Allah, what is the reward of a martyr?” The Holy Prophet answered: “A person who gave his life for Allah (i. e. a martyr), will become the intercessor for four hundred others who are deserving of hellfire. At the end of time, when my nation has been corrupted, Allah will grant hundred-fold reward to anyone adhering to my *sunna*.” The companions then asked: “And what will be the reward for also performing the *farā’id* (obligatory actions) in that time?” The Holy Prophet replied: “The reward for this will be immeasurably great by human standards, and Allah Almighty alone knows how He will reward such a person.”

Rajab

THE MONTH OF RAJAB is the seventh month of the Islamic calendar year and is termed *shabru llāb*, the month of Allah ﷻ. Whoever fasts three days during this month, will drink from that river of Paradise, which according to the description of our Holy Prophet is “whiter than milk, sweeter than honey, and cooler than snow.”

Another tradition relates that whoever fasts one day during Rajab will become free of sins as a newborn child; whoever fasts two days, his father and mother will be forgiven their sins; whoever fasts three days will be spared three great calamities: the punishment of the grave, leaving this life without faith, and the darkness of the grave. If one fasts for four days during Rajab, he will be made safe from the wretched Dajjāl (Antichrist). There are great rewards for fasting any day in Rajab. One who fasts six days during this month is rewarded as if he had been with the Holy Prophet at the Battle of Badr. The seven gates of Hell are closed for one who has fasted seven days of Rajab, and the eight gates of Paradise are opened for the one who has fasted eight days.

In the month of Rajab Allah ﷻ gives seventyfold reward for every act of worship. If one reads one *juz*’ of Qur’ān (the thirtieth part), he will be rewarded as if he had read seventy *juz*’. For every *rak’a* of prayer, he will be rewarded as if for seventy *rak’a*’t. For every repetition of the Holy Name, he will be rewarded as if for seventy repetitions. It is recommended to recite *istaghfiru llāb* seventy thousand times in the course

of this month, for Rajab is a month of mercy and forgiveness. It is also commendable to pray thirty sets of two *raka'āt* in honour of this month, whenever the time is convenient, for example after the sun has risen, at the time of *isbrāq*. In these *raka'āt*, after the *Fātiḥa*, one recites *Qul yā ayyuhā l-kāfirūn* and *Qul būma llāhu aḥad* thrice.

If one has fasted the entire month of Rajab, a heavenly angel calls out to him: "O servant of the Lord! The eight gates of Paradise are open to you, enter through whichever you wish!" There are some very pious people who fast the entire three months, from the beginning of the month of Rajab to the end of Ramaḍān. It is also said that hellfire will not be permitted to touch anyone who repeats every day *lā ilāba illā llāh* a thousand times, and *lā ilāba illā llāh, Muḥammadu r-rasūlu llāh* one hundred times until the end of Ramaḍān, 100,000 repetitions in all. It is possible to dedicate this recitation to another person who will then be granted safety from the fires of Hell.

The name of the month Rajab is written with the Arabic letters "rā", "jīm" and "bā". "Rā" stands for "raḥma", mercy, compassion, "jīm" stands for "jurm", offense, sin, and "bā" stands for "birr", Allah's Grace and Mercy. The Lord speaks: "My servant's sin stands between My Mercy and My Grace." It is enveloped by His Grace and Mercy and thus forgiven. This is the meaning of the month of Rajab.

The Night of Mi‘rāj, the Prophet’s Ascent to the Heavens

THIS IS THE NIGHT before the twenty-seventh day of Rajab. It was in this night that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was led into Paradise on the heavenly steed, the Burāq. It was during this night that the five daily prayers were made obligatory for the Muslims, as well as the fast of Ramaḍān and the giving of *zakāt*. The Holy Prophet was shown and given all this during his visit to the sixth heaven. Therefore it is a very holy night for us. In this night the gates of Paradise are opened and every prayer is granted by the unending Mercy and Compassion of our Lord Almighty.

There is one *ḥadīth* in which it is recommended to pray twenty *raka‘āt* in this night. In the first *rak‘a* one prays “*Qul hū*” after the *Fātiḥa*. After this prayer one is to recite “*Allābumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammadin wa sallim*” one hundred times, and one hundred times “*Istaghfiru llāb*”. Then one performs a *sajda*, prostration, asking Allah to grant all one’s wishes and desires in this world and the next. For the honour of this holy night, in which the Prophet stood before the Throne of the Almighty, all prayers will be granted. If one is not granted what one has asked for in this life, one will receive a thousand times more in the life to come ...

In the city of al-Quds (Jerusalem) there once lived a particularly pious and God-fearing woman. Whenever the month of Rajab dawned, she would exchange her ordinary dress for an old and worn gown. She would perform all her praying and fasting

during these days wearing this old gown. Upon her deathbed she spoke to her son and said, “My son, make sure that they bury me in my Rajab dress.” After she had passed away, her son felt embarrassed before their relatives and neighbours to bury his mother in this old and worn gown, being that she had been a lady of some wealth and means. So instead he wrapped her in a shroud of fine linen.

In the night after she had been laid in her grave, she appeared to him in a dream, saying to him, “My son, why have you not respected my last wish?” Her son awoke from the dream in great fright, grabbed the old gown, and went out to the graveyard. He found the freshly dug grave, but he failed to find his mother within it. Thereupon he fell down on the ground and wept, and he wept so long until he fell senseless. In that state he heard an unearthly voice that said to him: “Do you not know that We do not abandon him who showed respect for Our holy month of Rajab, who duly honoured it by fasting and praying? Do you not know that We leave him not unattended in his grave? We have raised your mother up and brought her into Paradise!”

The son heard this voice and heeded the words it spoke to him. He went home and was comforted, even though he had not found his mother in her grave.

Sha'bān

THIS IS THE EIGHTH MONTH of the Islamic year. Whoever prays twelve *raka'āt* in the first night of this month, reciting "*Qul hū*" five times after the *Fātiḥa*, will be granted the rewards of twelve thousand martyrs for his prayer, and his sins will not be recorded for forty days. Should he die during these forty days, he will be rewarded as if he had died a martyr. The recommended hour for this prayer is between the prayer times of Maghrib and 'Ishā'.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever wishes to follow me and to reach my rank and rewards, should fast three days during Sha'bān." The Holy Prophet used to fast especially during the month of Sha'bān. He was asked why he preferred to fast in this month, and he replied: "This month is neglected by most people. Everyone knows that Rajab is the month of Allah and tries to fast as much as possible during Rajab. Come Sha'bān, and many people think, 'Soon it will be the holy month of Ramaḍān when we will be fasting continuously,' and so the fast of Sha'bān is not much observed. But Sha'bān is the month when the Book of Fate is written and when the good and bad events of the coming year are decreed. That is why I fast, so that my Lord when He comes to write my destiny will find me fasting."

This rewriting of the Books of Fate occurs in the fifteenth night of Sha'bān, two weeks before the beginning of Ramaḍān. This is a tremendously holy night. The Angel of Death is not permitted to seize the souls of men between Maghrib and

‘Ishā’ of this night. During this night everyone’s destiny for the coming year will be decided, whether he is to live or to die, whether he is to marry and have children, whether he will find wealth or poverty. Therefore fasting on the day preceding and on the day following this holy night is highly recommended.

It is customary to pray one hundred *raka‘āt* in the fifteenth night of Sha‘bān. After the *Fātiḥa* one recites “*Qul hū*” ten times in every *rak‘a*, or else one may pray ten *raka‘āt*, reciting one hundred “*Qul hū*” after the *Fātiḥa*. But it seems to be preferable to pray one hundred *raka‘āt*. After every set of two *raka‘āt*, one gives *taslīm* (*as-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatu llāh*).

The fifteenth night of Sha‘bān is also called *laylat al-barā‘a*, and it is one of the five nights of the year in which the numb heart is quickened and restored to life once more. To spend a holy night in wakefulness and prayer fills the heart with new life. The life of the heart is faith, and unbelief is its death. Even if faith seems to have vanished from the whole world, it lives on in the hearts of men and can be revived at any moment. Therefore it is of greatest benefit for us to enliven these holy nights through our prayers as best we can.

The Islamic year has five such nights: the fifteenth night of Sha‘bān, *laylat al-barā‘a*; the twenty-seventh night of Ramaḍān, *laylat al-qadr*; the nights before both of the ‘Īd-celebrations, and [every] Thursday night. Whoever is particularly mindful of his prayers during these nights, his faith will be revived in his heart, and it will be infused with fresh strength.

However, the Holy Prophet ﷺ also recommended not to fast after the fifteenth of Sha‘bān up until the beginning of Ramaḍān, excepting those who have made it their custom to fast every Monday and Thursday during the months of Rajab and Sha‘bān. It is *makrūb*, undesirable, to fast after the fifteenth of Sha‘bān, because people ought to gather their strength for

the obligatory fast of Ramaḍān. But for those used to fasting on these days there is no objection.

Once, on the thirteenth of Sha‘bān, the angel Jibrīl appeared to the Holy Prophet and said to him, “O Prophet of Allah! Pray and make supplication for your nation that Allah Almighty might preserve them from Hell!” The Holy Prophet did as the angel commanded him to do, remaining wakeful throughout the night and praying incessantly for his nation (*umma*). When the sun had risen, the angel came to him and said, “O Prophet of Allah, I bring you good tidings: Allah Almighty has forgiven one third of your nation.” The Holy Prophet asked, “What of the remaining two thirds?” The angel replied: “I can say nothing about them.”

That following night, the fourteenth night of Sha‘bān, the angel came again to the Holy Prophet and urged him to again pray for his nation that Allah Almighty might preserve them from the fires of Hell. The Holy Prophet again spent all night praying and supplicating on behalf of his nation. In the morning the angel appeared to him and informed him that Allah Almighty in His endless Grace had granted his prayers and released another third of the Prophet’s nation. The Holy Prophet then asked, “And what of the last third?” “I can say nothing about that,” replied the angel.

But the third night, the fifteenth night of Sha‘bān, the angel again came to the Holy Prophet and said, “O Muḥammad, this is the night of the fifteenth of Sha‘bān, a holy night of incomparable mercy. In this night Allah Almighty sends down many times the amount of mercy onto the people on the earth, – look up and behold the heavens!”

The Holy Prophet lifted his head and gazed at the sky and he was shown the celestial gates opened wide, all eight gates

of Paradise! Each gate was guarded by an angel, and each angel cried out: “O our brother Jibrīl, what is this special night?” “This is the night of mercy and forgiveness,” he replied, speaking to the Holy Prophet, “so spend this night in prayer and beseech your Lord for forgiveness, and exhort your nation to pray as well.”

Then the Holy Prophet heard the angel of the first heaven as he chanted: “Happy is he who repents during this night ...” And he heard the angel of the second heaven as he chanted: “Happy is he who spends this night in prayer ...” He heard the angel of the third heaven chanting: “Happy is he who performs *rukūʿ* in this night ...” and he heard the angel of the fourth heaven singing: “Happy is he who makes *sajda* during this night ...” The angel of the fifth heaven he heard saying: “Happy is he who praises his Lord in this night ...” The angel of the sixth heaven he heard saying: “Happy is he who performs good deeds during this night ...” Thus he heard the angels of all the heavens praise the blessedness of this holy night.

The Holy Prophet asked the angel Jibrīl how long the blessings of this night would last, and Jibrīl answered, “Up until the crack of dawn ...”

For this reason we should try to spend as much time as we can in worship during this night, for *barāʿa* means forgiveness, acquittal.

One night ‘Ā’isha, may Allāh be pleased with her, the Holy Prophet’s wife, awoke and found the Prophet not at her side. She rose to look for him, but he was not to be found in any of the other wives’ homes. She then called at the house of his daughter Fāṭima and asked for him. He was not there either. Together they set out to look for him, but could find him nowhere. Finally ‘Alī, may Allāh bless his face, his son-in-law

said, "I know where to find him," and he led them to the place, which is nowadays called Jannat al-Baqī', a graveyard. The Holy Prophet used to go there frequently when he was alive. There they found him, squatting in a corner. They perceived his light, which rose up to heaven like a pillar.

They approached him and Fāṭima called out, "Father, father ...", but he did not respond. As they drew closer, they found him prostrating himself on the ground in *sajda*, tears streaming from his eyes. They fell down beside him and also began to weep. Finally they asked him, "O Prophet of Allah, what have you seen? Is it a revelation? Or have you received tidings of a great calamity? Is the Wrath of Allah upon us, or the enemy before the gates?" "No," replied the Holy Prophet, "it is neither a revelation, nor the enemy, nor the Wrath of Allah. But you must know that tonight is the night of *barā'a*, the night of Pardon and Acquittal and all prayers and supplications are heard and accepted during this night. I pray to Allah to make my nation safe from the fires of Hell. Come and help me pray for this ..." So they all prayed together during this night, 'Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and 'Ā'isha remained in prayer together until the break of dawn.

How should we, who we are barely able to pray for ourselves, be deserving of the prayers of these pure and sacred souls? May Allah forgive us and reward them with a thousand-fold of blessings, and send mercy and guidance to the wayward nation of Muḥammad ﷺ.

Ramaḍān

“The month of Ramaḍān wherein the Qur’ān was sent down as guidance for mankind and as clear proof of guidance and a standard of discernment.” (2:185)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said about this great and solemn month: “Mercy is its beginning, forgiveness is the middle and its end is salvation from the fires of Hell.”

WHEN THE HOLY PROPHET ascended the *minbar* on a Friday to give the *khuṭba* of the Jum‘a prayer, he set his foot upon the first step. As his other foot touched the second step, he audibly said “Āmīn”. He set his foot upon the third step and again was heard to say “Āmīn”, and when he stood upon the third step, he repeated this word, “Āmīn”. After he had delivered the *khuṭba*, and the Jum‘a prayer was over and the assembly had dispersed, the Prophet’s companion ‘Umar رضي الله عنه rose and asked him; “O Messenger of Allah, as you were ascending the steps of the *minbar*, we heard you say ‘Āmīn’ three times; what was the meaning of this?” For everyone knew that every action of the Holy Prophet was full of meaning. The Holy Prophet replied, “When I set my foot upon the first step, the angel Jibrīl عليه السلام appeared to me with my Lord’s command. He greeted me and told me, ‘If someone mentions your name and does not add his wishes for peace and blessings upon you (*as-ṣalātu wa s-salām*), he shall be brought low.’ Thereupon I said ‘Āmīn’ the first time. When I stood

upon the second step, the angel had already flown up to the seventh heaven and back, and had brought a new command from the Lord of the Worlds. He said, ‘O Prophet of Allah, if a person does not satisfy his parents’ demands and does not make them happy, he shall be brought low.’ This also I affirmed, saying ‘Āmīn’.

– This is a most important point: even if one’s parents are not Muslims, one must try to satisfy them. Their son is not obliged to bring them to their church, but he must pick them up and if needs be carry them home on his back. He need not serve them the wine they wish to drink, but he must take the glass from their hand if they demand this service of him. Parents have the right to demand these services of their children. –

“Then,” continued the Holy Prophet, when I had ascended the third step, the angel appeared once more and said: ‘If a man reaches the month of Ramaḍān but does not manage to attain mercy in it, then he is done for,’ to which I replied ‘Āmīn’ for the third time.”

“For the month of Ramaḍān is the month of Allah Almighty’s mercy and forgiveness, and whoever does not attain to mercy during this month is lost,” said the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The holy month of Ramaḍān is the month of mercy. From the first hour of the first day of this month, three hundred thousand sinners are released from Hell every hour. Even if their sins were great, Allah Almighty forgives them for the honour of this holy month, and for the respect they held for those who fasted and for the services they may have performed for them. An unimaginably large number of sinners will have attained forgiveness by the time the Night of Power, *laylat al-qadr*, sets in. One who in this time has not been able to attain mercy before Allah ﷻ and mankind, has truly forfeited much.

The Holy Prophet also said: “Whoever recites one hundred *aṣ-ṣalātu wa s-salām* on the Prophet on the day of Jum‘a (Friday), the Lord will give him a light on the Day of Judgment that will illuminate the whole gathering at the place of resurrection. And whoever welcomes the holy month of Ramaḍān with a joyous heart and yearns for it to begin, his body will not be touched by the fires of Hell.”

In one *ḥadīth qudsī* Allah Almighty says: “In the first night of Ramaḍān, the Exalted Lord speaks: ‘Whoever loves Us, We will love him too; whoever desires Us, We too will yearn for him; and whoever asks Us for forgiveness, him We shall forgive, for the honour of the month of Ramaḍān.’”

In Ramaḍān the “scribes” among the angels are commanded to record only the good deeds of those who are fasting. Their bad actions are not recorded and their sins are deleted from the record.

The Holy Prophet’s companion ‘ABBĀS, may Allah be pleased with him, relates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said: “If my nation only knew how great are the blessings of Ramaḍān, how many sins are forgiven and how much mercy is dispensed during this month, they would wish that Ramaḍān would last the whole year long, and they would spend the entire month in worship and devotion.”

The Holy Prophet said, “Everyone desires Paradise, but Paradise desires four kinds of people: those who read Qur’ān (who recite it, or who are *ḥāfiẓ*); those who feed the poor; those who fast during Ramaḍān and those who are able to keep their tongues from uttering bad words.”

*“O Believers, prescribed is for you the Fast,
even as it was prescribed for those that were before you –
haply you will be God-fearing.” (2:183)*

Allah Almighty has made fasting obligatory on us, as He has done for those who went before us. Paradise yearns for those who keep the fast. Allah Almighty rewards the believer for every prayer and for every good deed, and the rewards He will give him are described repeatedly in many of the *ḥadīth*. But Allah, the mighty and majestic, has not revealed the reward He will grant for fasting, for He says: “Fasting is Mine, and I am the One who grants its reward. The fasting servant abstains from the pleasures of eating and drinking for My sake. Fasting is as a shield, and whoever has fasted will know two pleasures: the pleasure of breaking the fast, and the pleasure of the encounter with his Lord. The smell coming from the mouth of a fasting person is more pleasing to Allah than the scent of musk.” (*Ḥadīth qudsī*, from AL-BUKHĀRĪ)

That is how much Allah, *subḥānahu wa ta’ālā* values the merits of the one who fasts. Even his sleep is recorded as an act of worship. In another *ḥadīth qudsī* it is said:

“Every good deed that man performs he does it for himself, except for fasting: that is for Me, and I am He who rewards it.”

Every prayer, every pious deed that a Muslim performs he does for himself, but fasting is one of Allah’s secrets. Fasting alone is an invisible form of devotion. Anybody can be observed performing his prayers, reading Qur’ān or going on a pilgrimage, but fasting is hidden, and only Allah knows about it. And Allah alone ﷻ knows how great is its reward.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: “On the Day of Judgment a group of souls shall be given wings and they will land on the wall surrounding Paradise. The gatekeepers of Paradise will ask them full of surprise, ‘Who are you?’ ‘We belong to the nation of Muḥammad,’ they will reply. ‘Have you already been judged?’ the angels will ask. ‘No,’ the winged group of souls will answer. ‘Have you passed over the bridge of Ṣirāṭ?’ the

angels will ask them. ‘No,’ they will reply. ‘How have you earned this high rank?’ the gate-keeping angels enquire. ‘By our Lord’s command we used to practise a secret form of worship (i. e., fasting), and so He has brought us here on secret byways ...’”

The Holy Prophet also said: “Allah Almighty has given me and my nation *five things* not given to any nation before mine. The first of these is the Gaze of Mercy, which Allah bestows upon them during the first night of Ramaḍān. Whomever this Gaze encompasses, he will not be touched by everlasting punishment. The second is that Allah has commanded His angels to ask for forgiveness for the nation of Muḥammad. The third is this: the [unpleasant] smell coming from the mouth of a fasting servant is more lovely to Him than musk or amber. The fourth gift is that Allah Almighty has spoken to His Paradise, ‘O Paradise, adorn yourself and make ready, for My fasting servant is approaching you.’ Fifth of all, He will grant pardon to every member of Muḥammad’s nation for having spoken these words: *Lā ilāha illā llāh, Muḥammadu r-rasūlu llāh.*”

One day the Prophet Mūsā, peace be upon him, said to the Lord, “O my Lord and God, how You have favoured me with gifts and distinctions! You speak to me directly without any mediator – can there be a higher degree of proximity and familiarity with You than this? Can You possibly have bestowed more honours than this on any human being?”

The Lord answered him and spoke, “O Mūsā, it is true, I speak to you without any mediation; but you must know that there are yet seventy thousand veils between you and Me. But at the end of time I shall send a prophet to a very weak nation. His name will be Muḥammad, Ḥabībullāh, the Beloved of Allah. I shall impose one month of fasting upon this nation.

Every evening when they break their fast, I shall send down upon them so much mercy and grace, o Mūsā, that only a single veil remains. This is the veil of death.

Were it possible to behold the Almighty Lord of the Worlds and Paradise in this life, this would be granted to the one who fasts the holy month of Ramaḍān and who recites the Throne-verse (*Āyat al-Kursī*, 2:255).

“O Mūsā, blessed are those who suffer the pangs of hunger for My sake and whose lungs are well nigh parched from thirst! I am even closer to these servants than I am to you, o Mūsā!”

The great Saint Dāwūd al-Ṭā’ī once fell asleep in daytime during Ramaḍān. He had a dream, wherein he saw himself sitting by the banks of a river of Paradise, which was of green emerald, the pebbles whereof were of rubies red. Close by were the Huris, the damsels of Paradise whose faces are as radiant as the sun. He gazed upon them full of wonder and exclaimed: “*Lā ilāha illā llāh, Muḥammadu r-rasūlu llāh!*” They answered him with the selfsame words and then introduced themselves, saying: “We are intended to be the wives of those who fast and pray during Ramaḍān, who perform much *tasbīḥ* and *sajda*.”

These Huris are clothed in seventy robes, one upon the other, each robe being of a different shape and colour, and yet one robe does not obscure another and all are wondrously visible simultaneously. The Huris are enthroned on marvelous settees of ruby and emerald, and they repose on pearl-encrusted golden beds. Before them are tables upon which are set many bowls and platters containing refreshments and beverages of many kinds. “This feast is laid out for those who have fasted during Ramaḍān, and it is prepared for them alone” say the Huris, as they await their bridegrooms ...

IBN ‘ABBĀS ﷺ relates that the Holy Prophet once said: “In the first night of the month of Ramaḍān a wind springs up from beneath the Divine Throne. This wind blows through the forests of Paradise and stirs the leaves on the branches of its trees, so that they begin to rustle. The rustling of these leaves, however, is so melodious and sweet that even the Huris, whose voices are unequalled for their sweetness and loveliness, look up in surprise and ask of each other from where these sweet sounds might issue. Then a voice will answer them: “It is the first night of the holy month of Ramaḍān, and a breeze full of Divine Grace has arisen, which stirs the trees in paradise gardens belonging to the nation of Muḥammad who are now commencing the fast of Ramaḍān ...” Then the Huris all intone a prayer, saying, “O our Lord, let us be given to those of Your servants who are keeping the fast of this holy month ...”

IBN ‘ABBĀS ﷺ has also related that he heard the Holy Prophet say: “Whoever rises during the first night of Ramaḍān (in order to pray), Allah will quicken his heart with new life.” Just as one enlivens the night by his prayers and acts of worship, so Allah ﷻ will revive his heart after he has died.

When the crescent moon of the month of Ramaḍān appears, all the angels around the Divine Throne exclaim from joy, “*Tūbā li-ummati Muḥammad!* Good fortune for the nation of Muḥammad! What a great blessing to be permitted to witness this holy month!”

The sun, the moon and the stars, the fishes in the sea and the birds in the air, all the creatures Allah has created, and whatever exists between heaven and earth praises the Lord ﷻ and asks for forgiveness for the nation of Muḥammad and for those who keep the fast. Only Shayṭān, the accursed devil, cries out in anger and pain, as he is forced to witness all the grace and forgiveness descending upon the sinners whom he

had already regarded as his ready prey. But during this month, Allah forgives all people, and commands His angels to dedicate all their devotions, their fasting, and their invocations to the nation of Muḥammad ﷺ.

The Holy Prophet has said: “In the first night of Ramaḍān all the devils and *jinn* are bound in chains, so that they might not disturb the fast of the Muslims. The seven gates of Hell are also shut tight, up until the end of the holy month of Ramaḍān.”

Then the eight gates of Paradise shall be opened, and every night the Lord will call out thrice: “Whoever asks anything of Me, I will fulfill his wishes. Whoever turns to Me to repent, I will accept his repentance. Whoever asks Me for forgiveness, him I shall forgive and deliver him from the fires of Hell.”

The Prophet’s companion ‘Umar ؓ relates about the Holy Prophet ﷺ: “When one of my nation wakes during a night in Ramaḍān and turns about on his bed, the two angels standing by his bedside say to him, ‘Arise, arise, O servant of Allah! For Allah Almighty wishes to grant you His mercy and forgiveness and to bless you. Therefore rise up!’ If this person then gets up, his bed begins to praise him and it prays for him, saying, ‘O Allah, give him a bed and a resting place in the loftiest reaches of Paradise!’ When he starts to get dressed, his clothing begins to praise him, saying, ‘O Lord, clothe him in the robes of Paradise! When he slips into his shoes, these praise him and say, ‘O Lord, make his step firm and let him not stumble on the bridge of Širāt!’ If he picks up a vessel containing water with the intention of making his ablutions, this vessel also prays for him, saying, ‘O Lord, give to him jugs of Paradise, so he might purify himself!’ He then begins to make his ablution (*wuḍū’*) and the water prays for him, ‘O Lord! As the water purifies his

mouth, so do You purify him from every sin!’ If he then prays two *raka‘āt* of prayer, his whole house prays for him, saying, ‘O Lord! Should his grave oppress him by its tightness, make it wide and let it be an abode of mercy, not a place of chastisement!’ When he makes supplication, Allah Almighty gazes upon him with the Gaze of Divine Compassion and speaks, ‘O My servant, you are My slave and I am your Lord and God. It is your place to ask, and it is Mine to answer; your part is to wish, and Mine is to give fulfillment; it is your part to ask for forgiveness and it is Mine to grant you pardon.’ Thus the Lord speaks to His servant.”

Allah, may He be praised and exalted, spoke to His Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام on Mount Sinai and said to him: “I have given two lights to the nation of Muḥammad ﷺ, so that two kinds of darkness might be illuminated thereby.” Mūsā عليه السلام asked the Lord, “What are these two lights?” and the Lord answered him, “One is the light of Ramaḍān, and the other is the light of the Qur’ān.” Mūsā, peace be upon him, then asked, “And which are the two kinds of darkness?” The Lord answered, “One is the darkness of the grave, and the other is the darkness of the Day of Judgment. Whoever reads the Qur’ān, his grave shall be lit up, and whoever fasts in Ramaḍān, he will have a light on Judgment Day.”

About the Tarāwīḥ Prayer

‘**A**LĪ, THE HOLY PROPHET’S SON-IN-LAW, may Allāh bless his face, spoke of the excellence of the Tarāwīḥ prayer, which is a part of the *sunna* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He said:

“Whoever prays the Tarāwīḥ prayer in the first night of Ramaḍān, will be made pure and freed of all sin, just as a new-born child.”

And he said, “Whoever prays the Tarāwīḥ prayer in the second night of Ramaḍān, his father and mother will be granted forgiveness, provided they were Muslims.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ in the third night of Ramaḍān, an angel will bring him the good tidings from the Divine Throne that he is now purified and that Allah has forgiven him all his sins of the past.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ in the fourth night of Ramaḍān, Allah will record for him the rewards of having read all the Holy Scriptures, the Torah, Injīl, Zabūr and Qur’ān.

Whoever prays the Tarāwīḥ prayer of the fifth night of Ramaḍān will be rewarded as if he had prayed in the holy mosque at Jerusalem, the Masjid al-Aqṣā, or in Medina.

For the Tarāwīḥ prayer of the sixth night of Ramaḍān a person receives the rewards of having made *ṭawāf* of the heavenly house, the *bayt al-ma’mūr*, and all the stones and dust upon the earth will pray and intercede for him.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ in the seventh night of Ramaḍān, will receive the reward of having lived in the time of the

prophet Mūsā, *'alaybi s-salām*, and having supported him against Pharaoh.

For the Tarāwīḥ prayer of the eighth night of Ramaḍān, he will be rewarded as the prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was rewarded by his Lord.

For the Tarāwīḥ prayer in the ninth night of Ramaḍān, he receives the blessings of having prayed together with the Holy Prophet Muḥammad عليه السلام.

For praying Tarāwīḥ in the tenth night of Ramaḍān, Allah Almighty provides him with all the goodness of this life and the next.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ during the eleventh night of Ramaḍān, will be without sin at the time he leaves this world, like a newborn child.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ in the twelfth night of Ramaḍān, on the Day of Judgment his face will shine as the moon when it is full.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ in the thirteenth night of Ramaḍān will be protected from all evils and devils.

Anyone who prays Tarāwīḥ in the fourteenth night of Ramaḍān, the recording angels will speak in his defense, saying, 'O Lord, this person has prayed the Tarāwīḥ prayer,' and his trial on the Day of Judgment will be made easy for him.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ in the fifteenth night of Ramaḍān, the angels of the Divine Throne and the Divine Court will ask for forgiveness for him.

For one who prays the Tarāwīḥ prayer of the sixteenth night of Ramaḍān the Lord will vouchsafe safety from the fires of Hell and promises to admit him into Paradise.

For the prayer of the seventeenth night, Allah will grant him the rewards of the prophets, peace be upon them.

In the eighteenth night, an angel will call out from on high: 'Good tidings to you, O servant of Allah! The Lord is well-pleased with you, and also with your parents!'

For praying Tarāwīḥ in the nineteenth night, he is dignified by being admitted among the dwellers of the loftiest paradise, the *firdaws al-ʿlā*.

For the Tarāwīḥ prayer of the twentieth night, Allah will grant him the rewards of the martyrs and the righteous.

In the twenty-first night the Lord erects a paradise mansion for him built of pure light.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ in the twenty-second night of Ramaḍān he will be led to the place of Judgment with a joyful heart, untroubled by grief and sorrow.

For the Tarāwīḥ prayer of the twenty-third night of Ramaḍān Allah will reward him with a splendid palace in Paradise.

If he prays Tarāwīḥ in the twenty-fourth night of Ramaḍān, Allah will grant twenty-four of his supplications during this night.

For the Tarāwīḥ prayer of the twenty-fifth night of Ramaḍān, Allah will free him from the punishment of the grave.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ in the twenty-sixth night of Ramaḍān will receive the rewards of forty years of prayer.

Whoever prays Tarāwīḥ in the twenty-seventh night of Ramaḍān will pass over the bridge of *Ṣirāt* with the speed of lightning.

For the prayer of Tarāwīḥ in the twenty-eighth night of Ramaḍān, his rank in Paradise will be elevated a thousandfold.

In the twenty-ninth night of Ramaḍān Allah Almighty will grant him the rewards of a thousand holy warriors for praying Tarāwīḥ.

And in the thirtieth night, the Lord Himself will address him, saying, ‘O My servant, eat of the fruits of Paradise and quench your thirst from its rivers, for I am your Lord God, and you are My beloved servant ...’”

Once there lived a man named Muḥammad who did not pray or fast for eleven months of the year. However, when Ramaḍān came around, he arose and washed himself, put on fresh clothes and perfumed his beard. He would then fast and pray, making up all the prayers of the past year. People asked him why he acted in this way, and he told them, “This month of Ramaḍān is the month of repentance and forgiveness; it is a month of mercy and special blessings. I trust my Lord to forgive me all my sins in this month, that is why I always pray during Ramaḍān.”

It so happened that this man Muḥammad died one day and after that several of his friends saw him in their dreams. They all asked him, “How have you fared? How has the Lord treated you?” All of them received the same answer in their dreams: “Allah the All-Merciful has forgiven me my sins on account of my having honoured the holy month of Ramaḍān.”

ANAS IBN MALIK, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that the Holy Prophet said:

“Whoever seeks the company of saintly and learned people during the month of Ramaḍān will receive the reward for the prayers of a whole year for every step towards such an assembly, and on the Day of Judgment he will stand together with me before the Throne of Mercy. And whoever prays all the prayers of this month in congregation, for every *rak‘a* Allah Almighty will grant him a city in Paradise filled with unimaginable delights. Whoever makes his parents pleased with him in Ramaḍān, Allah Almighty’s Gaze of Mercy rests upon him. And I am his guarantor, he will enter Paradise!”

If a woman's husband is pleased with her during Ramaḍān, she will receive the rewards of Maryam, the mother of the prophet ʿĪsā ﷺ, and of Asya ﷺ, the wife of Pharaoh.

And if someone looks after the needs of a poor person during Ramaḍān, Allah ﷻ will take care of a thousand of his own needs.

ABŪ HURAYRA ﷺ relates that he heard the Holy Prophet say:

“If someone lights a lamp in the mosque during Ramaḍān, Allah will make a light to shine for him in his grave, and He will grant him the reward of all the prayers that were prayed in the mosque in which his light shone. The angels pray for him and the Throne-bearers ask for forgiveness for him as long as his light is burning in the mosque ...”



The Holy Night of Power, Laylat al-Qadr

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES were all sent down during the month of Ramaḍān. The pages of the revelation that the prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was given came on the first day of Ramaḍān. Five hundred years later, the Torah was revealed, again on the first of Ramaḍān. Dāwūd عليه السلام received the Zabūr in the twelfth night of Ramaḍān. One thousand one hundred years later, in the eighteenth night of Ramaḍān the Injīl was revealed to ‘Isā عليه السلام. 620 years after that the revelation of the Holy Qur’ān commenced in the twenty-seventh night of Ramaḍān. That is why this night is marked by special celebrations and it is assumed to be the Night of Power, *laylat al-qadr*.

Sūrat al-Qadr (97)

Bismi llābi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm

*Behold we have sent it down on the Night of Power;
And what shall teach thee what is the Night of Power?
The Night of Power is better than a thousand months;
In it the angels and the Spirit descend,
by the leave of their Lord, upon every command.
Peace it is, til the rising of the dawn.*

The Story of Samsun

THERE EXISTS a traditional account regarding this Sura whereby the angel Jibrīl عليه السلام one day appeared to the Holy Prophet and told him the following story:

“A long time ago there lived in Israel a pious and God-fearing man named Samsun. His parents had placed him in the service of the Lord from the time he was a child. He grew to be an unusually strong man, and Allah ﷻ gave him such strength that he could singlehandedly defeat a great number of his foes.

There was a secret to his great strength, but no one knew about it except Samsun himself. He fought tirelessly against the foes of Israel, his only weapon being the jawbone of a camel. In his hand this bone became a sword, and with it he dispatched thousands of unbelievers. This camel bone also was a source of food for him, for whenever he was hungry, cooked and roasted meat would appear between the teeth of this camel bone, and whenever he was thirsty, cool, limpid water would stream forth from the teeth of the jawbone. Thus he also had water for his ablutions. At night the bone served him as a lamp. He spent many weeks and months alone in the desert, and by the Grace of God, he depended not on the society of men. He spent his nights in prayer and fasted during the day, and he fought no less than a thousand months against the unbelievers. No one could defeat him, for he was covered by Allah’s protection, and who can raise his hand against Allah?

One day, Samsun went into town. There he saw a woman and he desired her. She was one of the unbelievers, but he married her anyway, and for a while they lived together. This woman was named Dalila. Now the unbelievers saw that they had a chance, and they approached the wife of Samsun, saying to her, 'We will give you great reward, you shall have a sack of gold, if you will deliver your husband to us in chains.' Dalila said, 'How am I to do this, being that I am but a woman, and weak? You expect me to do what not even your mightiest fighter has accomplished?' The leaders of the unbelievers gave her a strong rope and told her to tie him up with it while he slept, and then to call them. She agreed to do this, took the rope and when Samsun finally lay down to rest after long prayers, she tied him hand and foot with the rope. After some time Samsun stirred and woke up intending to make his ablutions. He stretched his limbs slightly, as a sleeper will do when he awakes, and as he did so the ropes came away from his hands and feet as if they were no more than cobwebs. Samsun was surprised and asked, 'Who tied me up here?' Dalila realised that her plan had failed and resorted to feminine wiles. 'It was I who tied you up, O Samsun,' she admitted with a charming smile, 'I wished to find out how strong you really are ...' Samsun smiled indulgently and forgot the incident.

The next night the plotters supplied her with iron chains with which to bind Samsun while he slept, and she did so. But again, when he stretched his limbs to rise for his prayers, the chains fell off him and clattered to the ground, breaking apart as if they were of clay. 'What is this?' cried Samsun, 'who has bound me with chains?' Again Dalila admitted that she had done so, adding, 'I must say, you really do possess tremendous strength! Is there nothing at all that can bind you?' Samsun then replied, 'O Dalila, I am a specially dedicated servant of

the Lord and His light radiates from my heart and runs in my veins. It is this light, which burns away all fetters and chains of this world, and there is nothing my enemies can bind me with. The Lord's light turns all their wills to dust and ashes.' Dalila saw that he was in a mood to talk and sought to take advantage of this. 'So there is nothing in this whole wide world,' she began, 'that can overcome you? Is there no power at all that can bring you down?' Samsun answered, 'Oh yes, there is a way, but no one knows about it, for it is a secret. My strength is lodged in my hair, which has never been cut. If I were to be bound with my own hair, my strength would leave me and I would be as helpless as a child ...'

Now Dalila knew what she had to do. As he lay sleeping the very next night, she cut off his long hair and braided the strands into ropes. With these she bound him hand and foot, then she called for the guards. Samsun awoke and was unable to free himself of his bonds. Thus his enemies found him, helpless and betrayed upon his bed, and triumphantly they carried him off. Dalila received her bag of gold, and the curse of Allah to go with it.

The princes of the unbelievers prepared a great celebration to take place in the feasting hall. This was a building that rested on many pillars. Samsun was tied between two of these pillars, and as the unbelievers drank and made merry, they first of all gouged out his eyes and blinded him. After that they tormented him and hurt him in many ways, and in the end they left him slumped between the two pillars to die of his wounds.

As he was swooning and close to death, the angel Jibrīl عليه السلام appeared to him and said, 'Take heart, O Samson, for Allah is with you. He has been pleased to exalt your rank to that of the prophets. Ask of Him whatever you wish, He will grant it to you.' Samsun prayed, then he said, 'I ask the Lord to

restore me and return to me the strength I once had, so that I might destroy all His enemies here with one blow.’ The angel said, ‘O Samsun, behold, your hair has grown long again, and with it your strength has been returned to you.’ Samsun then felt the strength return to his limbs. He rattled his chains and braced himself against the pillars he was tied to. The pillars gave way and the whole building collapsed, so that the entire company of evil merry-makers was buried beneath it and not a single one escaped his death. Allah Almighty also restored Samsun’s eyes and gave him back his eyesight, and Samsun went out and fought another thousand months against the enemies of Allah. And a thousand months are eighty-three years and three months.”

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished telling his companions this story, they became dejected, so that he asked them why this story made them so sad. They replied, “O Rasūlullāh, what a weak people we are, the nation of the last prophet! What tremendous strength and vitality Allah Almighty bestowed upon His hero Samsun whom you have just told us about! Whereas He has granted Him the service of a full two thousand months, that is twice eighty-three years, to fight in His way against the enemies of the Lord, if we should live to see our eightieth year, we can hardly rise from our seat. It strikes us as painful and a bitter loss that we are denied this reward ...”

The Holy Prophet then lowered his head and was silent for some time. When he again lifted his head, the angel Jibrīl عليه السلام had come to him and brought him the revelation of the *Sūrat al-Qadr*, which he then recited to his companions. The Holy Prophet was filled with joy at this revelation. For in this Sura it is said that the revelation of the Holy Qur’ān had begun in the Night of Power, that is to say that the Holy Qur’ān had

been sent down to earth from its seat on the well-preserved tablets, the *lawḥ al-maḥfūz* in the Divine Presence. Allah, may His glory be glorified, says in this Sura:

*“And what shall teach thee what is the Night of Power?
The Night of Power is better than a thousand months ...”*

He has given this precious night to the nation of Muḥammad ﷺ and granted it to them as a gift.

But which night is this sacred night? Generally it is assumed to be the twenty-seventh night of Ramaḍān, because this is the night when the revelation of the Holy Qur’ān began, but it is not known for sure. It could be any odd night of the month, the first, the third, the seventh, and so on, but with greater probability it is one of the last odd-numbered nights of the month. Allah Almighty has kept this knowledge from us, He has hidden this sacred night within the month of Ramaḍān so that every day of the month might be honoured. In the same way He has hidden His holiest Name in the Holy Qur’ān, for if this Name were known, no one would ask for any more than this. In this way, however, if someone has read the whole of the Qur’ān, he will also have read Allah’s holiest Name. Likewise, He has hidden His saints and chosen ones among the crowd of common people, so that each one of His servants might be given honour and nobody be despised, for it is impossible to know whether the least likely one might in reality be one of the saints.

During this Night of Power, Allah Almighty commands His great archangels Jibrīl, Mikā’īl and Isrāfīl ﷺ to make ready. Each of these angels then assembles a host of seventy thousand angels, each of whom commands another host of seventy thousand angels. These angelic armies then descend upon the earth, flags flying. One of their standards is the “*ṭiwā’ al-ḥamad*”

the banner of Praise, under which the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ will gather his nation on the Day of Judgment. The second flag is the “banner of Kindness”, the third is the “banner of Pardon”, the fourth is the “banner of Mercy”. The banner of Praise will be erected between heaven and the earth, the banner of Pardon will be set upon the revered Ka‘ba, the banner of Mercy will be placed upon the Prophet Muḥammad’s grave in Medina ﷺ, and the banner of Kindness upon the holy house at Jerusalem.

After the angels have erected these banners in their appointed places, they roam the earth and offer their greetings of peace. They give their salāms to all the believers in this night. They visit the houses of the Muslims and give salāms to those dwell therein. Some houses they greet only from without and pass on. Other houses they enter and give greetings before continuing on. Some houses the angels enter and greet their dwellers with great warmth, and yet other Muslims are embraced by the angels and held close. Thus the angels visit all the believers on the entire earth.

Which are the dwellings that the angels only greet from without? They are the ones that harbour a dog, alcoholic drink, or images. – By images are meant not ordinary pictures or photographs of one’s children etc., but images or statues that are revered and held in high esteem, as idols. – Those houses the angels of Mercy do not enter, they salute the inhabitants only from outside and go their way. The houses they enter but leave again very soon, having quickly delivered their salāms, are the houses of the sleepers. These inhabitants are not aware of the holy night, no one is wakeful and engaged in prayer, so the angels greet them and pass on. A third group of dwellings, which the angels enter and where they warmly greet the inhabitants are those in which *dhikr* and *tasbīḥ* are

being performed. The houses where people are at prayer are the ones the angels love most, and into which they enter and embrace those praying within, and Allah Himself sends them His salāms.

One day the Holy Prophet sat musing about the state of his nation and he began to weep. He wept so much that his tears ran over his blessed beard and fell upon the earth. “How will they be able to stand on the Day of Judgment? Will Allah Almighty forgive them their sins, or will they be destined for Hell?” He wept for his nation’s sake from the day he was born, all the sixty-three years of his lifetime, up until the hour of his death. He cried, “O ‘Azrā’īl, do not punish my nation, punish me in their stead!” ‘Azrā’īl ؑ then spoke to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, saying, “O Prophet of Allah, I am instructed to take the souls of the believers of your nation in the way I only take the souls of the prophets, just as one might draw a hair out of a lump of butter.”

Another time when the Holy Prophet was weeping for his nation, the angel Jibrīl ؑ approached him and said, “O Prophet of Allah, the Lord promises to give your nation all that he has given to the prophets of the past, excepting the rank of prophethood. Other than this rank, He wishes to bestow upon them Grace and Favour in the same measure that He has bestowed it upon them. For He has said: ‘Peace be upon Nūḥ in the worlds!’ and He gave him prophethood along with His greetings of peace, and He saved him from the flood. And He has said: ‘Peace be upon Mūsā and Hārūn!’ as He gave them greetings of peace and made them victorious over Pharaoh and safe from his machinations. Then He said: ‘Peace be upon Ibrāhīm!’ and He gave Ibrāhīm His peace and gave him safety in Nimrod’s fire and saved him from destruc-

tion. Now He has sent me, Jibrīl (who is also called “*rūb*”, the spirit), in this holy Night of Power to bring peace to your nation, and to whomever He sends His Peace, He also sends His Mercy. So deliver to them these glad tidings! Allah has spoken: ‘O My Beloved, do not be saddened for your nation, for I shall give them high rank and dignity when they have left this world.’”

Such are the immeasurable blessings of the holy month of Ramaḍān.

The Holy Prophet is alleged to have said, “Whoever repeats the *shabāda* thrice during the holy Night of Power, Allah Almighty shall reward him with three gifts: all his sins of the past are forgiven; He will be firmly established in his faith; and He will continue to guide him along the path of the righteous.”



About I'tikāf

‘Ā’isha رضي الله عنها, the wife of the Holy Prophet ﷺ reported: “If a person performs *i’tikāf* [seclusion, retreat] in the mosque during the last ten days of Ramaḍān with sincere and pure intention, Allah Almighty will forgive him all his sins.”

‘Ā’isha رضي الله عنها also reported: “The Holy Prophet used to retreat into the mosque during the last ten days of Ramaḍān for his *i’tikāf*, until the year of his death. And he also instructed his wives to withdraw into their homes and not to go out.”

Even if only a single person in a town or village performs *i’tikāf*, it is sufficient for all the inhabitants of that place [*sunnat al-kifāya*]. The exercise of *i’tikāf* means to completely withdraw from all worldly activity, not speaking to anybody and leaving the mosque only to perform the necessary ablutions. One’s time is spent fasting and praying, reading Qur’ān, reciting *dhikr* and *tasbeḥ*, and one emerges only for the ‘*Īd* prayer. It goes without saying that during these days one is exempted from all worldly occupation and work. Other people take over the task of preparing the food for those in *i’tikāf* and of looking after them in general.

I’tikāf is also permitted to women and it is recommended for them. It is praiseworthy for a woman to make the time to perform *i’tikāf* even if only for a single day during the last third of Ramaḍān. If she cannot manage even that because of her obligations toward her household and family, then even one hour will suffice. For instance, she can retire to pray after

finishing the *saḥūr*-meal and make the intention before Allah to perform an *i'tikāf*. Then she may pray whatever she likes, *tabajjud*, *tasbīḥ*, *dhikr* etc., and her intention will be accepted and she will be preserved from the fires of Hell.

When Ramaḍān is About to End

The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: “In the last night of Ramaḍān all the heavenly hosts assemble and begin to weep for the disaster about to befall the nation of Muḥammad.” His companions asked him, “What is this disaster, O Prophet of Allah?” “The disaster,” continued the Holy Prophet, “is that the month of Ramaḍān is drawing to a close, and with it all the blessings it bestows upon mankind.”

Heaven and earth weep for the passing of Ramaḍān, whereas it is we who should be weeping, but we are enveloped in veils of heedlessness and we know nothing. During Ramaḍān all prayers are heard, and every *ṣadaqa* given, every type of prayer or supplication made is awarded a multiple of the awards usually granted. Sins are forgiven and sinners are granted respite from their chastisement. One who dies during Ramaḍān will be transported to Paradise directly, without having to endure the punishment of the grave. Praised be Allah Almighty who has granted us this holy month!

About Zakāt al-Fitr

It is incumbent on every Muslim to give *zakāt al-fitr* even if he was not able to fast during Ramaḍān. It is an obligatory donation, and it consists of a certain measure of wheat or raisins or similar goods, or the equivalent in currency. This *fitra* must be given before the ‘*Īd* prayer, and can be given any time after the fifteenth of the month of Ramaḍān. The exact amount is determined every year and is announced in the mosques. If a child is born before the ‘*Īd* prayer, *fitra* needs to be paid for this child as well. The money or donation is given to a poor person of one’s acquaintance or to the Imam who has ways of distributing the contribution.

This *fitra* is similar to the *sajda al-sabw*, the prostration of forgetfulness, which is to be performed when one has committed an error in one’s prayer or forgotten to perform one of its parts. As this *sajda* completes one’s prayer, so this *fitra* perfects the fasting of Ramaḍān. It makes up for all the mistakes and breaches of the fast we might have committed: one unlawful glance, a mistaken word or a bad thought. Fasting has two wings, one of them is our fasting, the other is the *fitra*. If we neglect to give the *fitra*, our fast remains suspended in mid-air and cannot rise aloft to the Divine Presence. When we have given our *fitra*, we provide our fasting with its second wing and it then reaches to the Throne of the Almighty.

One day the Holy Prophet’s companion ‘Uthmān ؓ came to him and said, “O Prophet of Allah! I have forgotten to give the *fitra* before the prayer of the ‘*Īd*. When I emerged from

the prayer and suddenly remembered, I freed a slave and in addition I gave a thousand gold pieces as *ṣadaqa*. O Prophet of Allah, will Allah accept my donation?" The Holy Prophet answered, "O 'Uthmān, even if you had given a hundred times the amount in the way of Allah, had you freed a hundred thousand male and a hundred thousand female slaves, and donated a whole world of silver and gold, nothing could match the value of the *fitra* given before the prayer of the 'Īd, for the *zakāt al-ḥiṭr* is a sacred duty (*farḍ*)."

When the Muslims return to their homes after the 'Īd prayer, the Lord says to His angels, "O My angels, when a labourer has done his duty, he must be recompensed for his labours. My servants have obediently fasted for a full month. The time is now come for Me to reward them." Thereupon the angels answer, "O our Exalted Lord God, have You not already granted them immeasurable treasures of mercy and blessings during the month of Ramaḍān? What compensation might they be lacking?" Allah Almighty then says to them, "My angels, the blessings I granted them for every single day of fasting were only a gift of honour, not their reward. By My Divine Majesty and Glory, I shall reward them with what 'no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human mind has ever conceived of.'" (*Ḥadīth qudsī*)

'Ā'isha رضي الله عنها, the wife of the Holy Prophet relates that the Holy Prophet once said: "On the Day of Judgment all the people will be resurrected and all will be hungry and thirsty except for the prophets and their households, and the Muslims who have fasted during the months of Rajab, Sha'bān and Ramaḍān; they will suffer neither hunger nor thirst."

The Holy Prophet said, "On the Day of Judgment the fasting of Ramaḍān and the recital of the Qur'ān will make intercession for the Muslims. Ramaḍān will say: 'O Allah, Your

servant abstained from food and drink and his desires during all the days of my duration, so give him to me now!’ And the Qur’ān will say: ‘O Lord, this servant of Yours refrained from sleep during the nights in order to read me, so give him to me now!’ Allah the All-Compassionate will accept their intercession and admit this servant to the realm of eternal bliss.”

When the Day of Judgment has come, the Lord will give shape to the month of Ramaḍān, just as all forms of devotion will assume a shape. Ramaḍān will be given a shape so lovely that all who behold it will be rendered speechless by wonder. Ramaḍān will pass among the rows of resurrected souls until he has come before the Throne of Splendour before which he will prostrate himself in adoration. Allah, the Lord of Judgment, shall then address him, saying, “O Ramaḍān, state your wishes, for I shall grant them.” Ramaḍān then speaks up and says, “O Allah, O my Lord, I wish that You might give me all those who have fasted during my days and who have honoured me in the sincerity of their hearts.” The Lord then will say to him, “Go to the field of ‘Arafāt; there you will find all those who have fasted and who treasured you for your true worth. Go there and bring them all before Me!”

Ramaḍān will then proceed to the field of ‘Arafāt and look for all those who had fasted during the days of his month, and he will bring them into the Divine Presence. “O Ramaḍān,” says the Lord, “are these the one who truly knew your real worth?” – To truly know the worth of Ramaḍān means that one does not take food in the presence of one who is hungry; that one is heedful of all improper and inadmissible things; that one guards one’s eye against all that is forbidden and withholds one’s hand from all that is unlawful. Whoever refrains from these things from fear of God, they have realised the true worth of Ramaḍān. The Lord Allah speaks of them

when He now asks Ramaḍān, “O Ramaḍān, what shall I grant My servants?”

Ramaḍān then answers and says, “O my Lord! Robe them in the raiments of paradise and set upon their heads the Crown of Eminence.” Allah ﷻ will grant His servants all of this, and will also allow them to intercede for seventy people deserving of Hellfire. He weds them to seventy thousand Huris and lets them ride along the Bridge of Şirāṭ on a *burāq* (a heavenly winged steed) faster than a bolt of lightning.

Then the Lord asks Ramaḍān, “What else do you wish Me to grant these servants?” “O Allah,” answers Ramaḍān, I would ask that they might be neighbours to the blessed Prophet in the loftiest Paradise. O Allah, this is all I can think of wishing for them, but Your Kindness and compassionate Grace are immeasurable. So give to them as befits Your Divine Majesty and Splendour!”

Allah, may He be glorified, then rewards them from His infinite stores of treasure and presents to each of His servants a thousand castles in Paradise made of ruby and emerald, and a thousand cities with a thousand splendid mansions in each, wherein they will abide in a state of unending bliss.

The Six Days of Shawwāl

THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN is followed by the month of Shawwāl. There are tremendous rewards for those who fast an additional six days during Shawwāl.

The Holy Prophet said, “When RamaḌān has ended, the *nafs* of man rejoices; the reins are slackened, it is once more permissible to eat and drink during the day, and also to enjoy sexual congress. To resume fasting at this moment is tantamount to waging a holy war (*jibād*).”

This struggle with the *nafs* is much greater and much more difficult than during the month of RamaḌān when fasting is an obligatory duty for all Muslims. That is why the elective fast of Shawwāl and the voluntary tightening of the reins will be rewarded so highly – and Allah alone knows how much reward it carries.

The reason for fasting six days in Shawwāl is given in the Holy Qur’ān where it is stated:

*It is He that created the heavens and the earth in six days,
then seated Himself upon the Throne ... (57:4)*

The creation of the worlds occurred in the six days of the month of Shawwāl, the heavens and the earth were created during the first week of Shawwāl. The Holy Prophet spoke, “Whoever fasts the six days of Shawwāl will be rewarded with the number of things the Almighty has created in these six days.”

The Holy Prophet also said, “Whoever fasts the thirty days of Ramaḍān, his fast is worth three hundred days of fasting. If he fasts the additional six days of Shawwāl, his fast will amount to 360 days, that is to say, as if he had fasted the entire year. For fasting is forbidden on five days of the year: on the ‘Īd of Ramaḍān, and on the four days of the ‘Īd of the Ḥajj, ‘Īd al-*Aḍḥā*.”

The Holy Prophet ﷺ spoke: “The human body possesses three-hundred parts. When death is approaching, Allah Almighty gives to each of these parts a particular kind of pain, and not one will be the same as the other. Were Allah to burden one part of the body with the entire agony of death, all of creation would perish on account of this. But Allah ﷻ has distributed the pangs of death separately among all the parts of the body.

If somebody has fasted Ramaḍān and the following six days of Shawwāl, Allah will reward him in this manner: as a sip of cool water is refreshing on a scorching hot summer’s day, so death will be for the one who has fasted the six days of Shawwāl, as a drink of cool water on a hot summer’s day.”

The Holy Prophet said: “Allah has created an angel with a fourfold face. Between one aspect and another there lies a distance of a thousand years. With one of his faces the angel prostrates in *sajda* up until the Last Day, while he intones with his lips: ‘Praise be to Thee, O Lord, how great is Thy Beauty!’ The second face of this angel is turned towards Hell, and with it he says: ‘Woe to those who enter therein!’ The third face faces Paradise and its lips say: ‘Great joy for those who enter within!’ The fourth face is fixed on the Throne of the Almighty and it says: ‘O Lord, Thou alone art deserving of Praise! Do not punish those of the nation of Muḥammad ﷺ who have spent the month of Ramaḍān fasting!’”

There are three levels of fasting: the level of the ordinary people, that of those destined for a special calling, and the level of the chosen ones among those of an especial calling.

Of what does the fasting of ordinary folk consist? It consists of abstaining from food and drink and sexual pleasures until the sun has set.

The fast of those destined for a special calling consists in their exercising watchfulness over all parts of their body, taking care that neither eye nor ear perceive anything unlawful, and that their tongue utters no harmful or untrue word, and their hand does not reach for anything not permitted to them, and their foot not lead them to prohibited places.

But the chosen ones among those of special calling also impose a fast upon their hearts: they carry nothing in their hearts but Allah, no worldly thought disturbs their devotions, and even more than that: neither this world nor the prospect of the next can turn their attention from gazing at the Divine Omnipresence.

This level however is reserved for the prophets and saints. Of them it is said that they will each be intercessors for seventy thousand people on the Day of Judgment.

On the Day of Judgment all souls will be resurrected and will stand for fifty thousand years before the Lord of the Worlds, and they will suffer great hunger and thirst. Then those will be known who fasted during Ramaḍān in this life, for by the Command of Allah ﷻ food and drink will be brought to them from Paradise, and they will not suffer any discomfort. A voice will then be heard, calling:

*“Eat and drink with wholesome appetite,
for that you did long ago, in days gone by!”* (69:24)

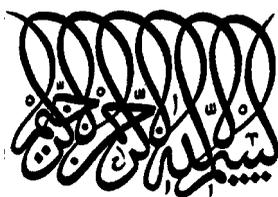
R A M A Ḍ Ā N

Only Almighty Allah knows of the rewards He holds in store for those who used to fast. We pray all the days of our life that He might bestow a portion of His gifts upon us and admit us among those gathered in the realms of bliss.

May He in His Mercy grant us forgiveness!

Āmīn.

PART II
ON FASTING, PRAYER AND
OTHER MATTERS



About Prayer

*Truly those who believe and do deeds of righteousness,
who observe the prayer and give zakāt,
they will have their reward with their Lord.
On them shall be no fear,
nor shall they grieve. (2:277)*

THE PROPHET'S COMPANION 'Umar رضي الله عنه relates: "One day a Bedouin came to the Holy Prophet and asked him, 'O Prophet of Allah, I profess the *shabāda* (*Lā ilāha illā llāh, Muḥammadu r-rasūlu llāh*), I pray five times a day, I fast during Ramaḍān, I pay my *zakāt*, and I even rise in the night to perform my prayers. Should I die now, will I be counted among those about whom it is written:

*And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger,
they will be with those upon whom Allah has bestowed
His Grace from among the prophets, the truthful,
the martyrs and the righteous ... (4:69)*

The Holy Prophet pressed his blessed fingers together and held up his hands, saying, 'Verily, if you have not committed anything against your parents or any other servant of Allah, you shall be among these.'

The Holy Prophet has said: “Whoever prays the five daily prayers in congregation will be forgiven *five* things. First of all, he will not suffer poverty in this world; secondly, he will suffer no punishment in his grave; thirdly, on the Day of Judgment, Allah will place his book [of reckoning] in his right hand; fourthly, he will pass across the Bridge of *Ṣirāt* with the speed of lightning; and fifthly, Allah will admit him into Paradise without trial or punishment.”

He ﷺ has also said: “A man’s prayer in congregation in the mosque is more excellent than forty years of praying separately by himself.”

And he ﷺ has also said: “The congregational prayer will receive twenty-seven times the reward of the prayer performed individually.”

The Holy Prophet said: “On the Day of Gathering the Lord will cause the mosques to appear as ships with billowing white sails smelling of musk and saffron. Their minarets are the masts, and they are made of green topaz. The *mu’adhdhin* [who calls to prayer] will be their captain, and the community of worshippers will be the crew. These ships will pass the Bridge of *Ṣirāt* fully laden with lightning speed. The angels will ask, ‘Who is travelling on these ships? Are they sons of man or are they angels close to Allah?’ The entire gathering will gaze at these ships as they pass. ‘Are they prophets or messengers?’ the angels will ask. Then a voice will be heard explaining, ‘No, they are neither prophets nor messengers, nor are they celestial angels; they are those from the nation of Muḥammad who consistently performed their prayers in congregation in the mosques.’”

The Holy Prophet also said: “My nation will be gathered on the Day of Judgment. One group among them will step forth with faces as radiant as the stars. The angels will ask them,

‘Who are you?’ and they will answer, ‘We are of those who when they heard the *adbān* being called left everything and rushed to take ablutions and make ready for prayer.’ Then a second group will step forth whose faces shine like the moon when it is full. ‘What were your works?’ the angels will ask them. They will reply, ‘We performed our ablutions and made ready for prayer even before the *adbān* was sounded.’ Finally a third group steps forward and their faces glow with the brightness of the sun. ‘And how did you act?’ the angels ask them. ‘We used to sit in the mosque in anticipation of the prayer, when the *adbān* was called,’ will be their answer.”

The Holy Prophet said, “Whenever a person stands for prayer and intones the *takbīr* [Allāhu akbar], Allah Almighty commands His angels, saying, ‘O My angels, remove the sins of this servant, for his sins are like a polluted garment, and it is not proper that My servant should approach Me in an unclean robe.’ Thus the servant prays to his Lord in a state of purity and freed from sin, as if he had only just been born of his mother. When he has completed his prayer, the angels ask the Almighty Lord, ‘O Lord, shall we now return his sins to him?’ The Lord Almighty replies, ‘O My angels, by My Splendour and Praiseworthiness, it befits Me not that I should return to My servant the burden of his sins once I have taken it from him. Behold, I have forgiven him.’”

Therefore the Holy Prophet also said to his companions, “If someone lives by a stream, and he washes in it five times a day, does there remain any impurity upon him?” The companions, may Allāh be pleased with them, answered, ‘No, Rasūlullāh, no impurity will remain.’ Then the Holy Prophet said, “This is the parable of prayer: in His Divine Mercy, Allah ﷻ cleanses His servant of all minor sins, so that he emerges entirely pure from his prayer.”

The Holy Prophet also relates that Allah Almighty created His angel Jibrīl ﷺ in the perfection of beauty, which is why he is referred to as “the peacock among the angels”. The Almighty gave him six hundred pairs of wings, their span ranging from the East to the West. It is said that once, when he brought the revelation to the Holy Prophet, he stretched his wings between heaven and earth; the space between them, however, was just a little too short, so that the very tips of his tremendous wings remained slightly bent.

One day the angel Jibrīl ﷺ saw himself in a mirror, and beholding his mirror image, he cried out in wonderment, “O my Lord God! Have You created any creature more perfect than me?” The Lord answered and spoke, “Truly, My archangel Jibrīl, I have given no creature greater beauty than I have bestowed upon you.” Then Jibrīl fell down prostrating himself before the Lord and he remained in this *sajda* for twenty thousand years. – For the *raka‘āt* and the postures of prayer of the holy angels are not as ours, and they are able to remain in one position for thousands upon thousands of years. –

When the great angel Jibrīl ﷺ rose from his two *raka‘āt* of gratitude after forty thousand years, he heard the voice of his Lord, as it said to him, “O My angel Jibrīl, by My awesome Majesty and absolute Splendour, no prayer in all My Creation has ever pleased Me more than yours; but by My Might and Glory, I say unto you: at the end of times a prophet will arise on earth whose name shall be Muḥammad. His nation will be a weak people; they will barely perform their obligatory devotions, they will be faulty and forgetful, with scarce attention and mindfulness, overcome by sin. But by My Omnipotence, I swear to you that their imperfect devotions will in My View be more pleasurable and acceptable than the *raka‘āt* of forty thousand years that you have offered Me.”

The archangel Jibrīl (جبرئيل) was amazed at this and asked Allah, the Lord, “O Lord, what reward have You promised them for this prayer that pleases You so?” Allah Almighty replied, “For that I will give them Paradise, which is called *jannat al-ma’wā*, the Garden of Sojourn.” “O my Lord, permit me to view this Paradise.” The Lord gave him permission and the angel opened up all his six hundred pairs of wings at once and flew towards this paradise garden. Each time that he opened one pair of his wings, he covered a distance of three thousand years, and when he closed one pair of wings he was propelled that selfsame distance. Thus he continued his flight for no less than three hundred years. Then his strength waned and he dropped down below one of the trees of Paradise. He prostrated himself and cried out, “O my Lord, Your servant is so weak, and Your Almightyness is limitless. Tell me though, am I getting closer to the Paradise that You have promised those of Your servants who pray to You five times a day? Have I covered half the distance, or a third, or at least one quarter of the way?”

Then the Almighty Lord spoke to him and said, “O My angel, even were I to give you twice the number of wings with which to fly, and twice the strength for your journey, and were you to fly double the distance that you have flown, you would not even reach a tenth of that which I have ordained for My servants for only two of their *raka‘āt*. All the way you have come so far is but a small alcove of this paradise garden, which I have appointed for My servants. For all your strength, O Jibrīl, you cannot even reach one tenth of what I will give them for their two *raka‘āt*. Even if I were to give them all the eight gardens of paradise, I would still feel to be owing them.”

Thus our prayers are of such high value in the View of the Almighty, praised be He in all eternity.

The Holy Prophet also said: “Allah spoke to me and said, ‘Whoever obeys Me in three things is My true Friend, and whoever opposes Me in three things, he is truly My enemy.’” “And what are these things, O Messenger of Allah?” asked the companions. “The first of these is prayer, the second is the fasting of Ramaḍān, and the third is the cleansing of all (ritual) impurities,” answered the Holy Prophet. “These three things are goods entrusted to Allah’s servant by his Lord. If he faithfully attends to them, His Lord will grace him with His Friendship.” (That is to say, He will raise him to the rank of one of His saints). (*Ḥadīth qudsī*)

The eminent companion MU‘ĀDH IBN JABAL ؓ heard from the companion Jābir ؓ who remembered the Holy Prophet as having said: “When the Holy Prophet visited the Heavens during the night of his *mi‘rāj* (ascension), he beheld the angels performing the various postures of prayer and the different manners of devotion. Since the day of their creation, the angels of the first heaven were engaged in incessant repetition of the Holy Name of the Lord (*dhikru llāh*), and they were in the position of *qiyām* (standing). The angels in the second heaven had assumed the position of *rukū‘* since the day of their creation. On the day of Judgment these angels will say, ‘O Lord, we were not able to worship You in a fitting manner.’ The angels of the third heaven maintain the position of *sajda* (prostration) since the day they were created. When the Holy Prophet came to see them and gave them greetings of peace, they raised their heads to return his *salāms*, after which they again lowered them to the ground. That is why the Muslim prayer consists of two *sajdas*. The angels of the fourth heaven recite the *at-tabiyyāt* prayer, and the angels of the fifth heaven recite the ‘*subhānaka*’; the angels of the sixth heaven intone *takbīr* (*Allāhu akbar*) and the angels of the seventh heaven the

tablīl (*lā ilāha illā llāh*). The Holy Prophet was delighted by these forms of devotion, and he asked his Lord to grant his nation a prayer containing these postures. The Lord answered his prayer and taught him to pray in the way the Muslims have prayed ever since.

If someone performs his prayers observing all the fine points of its *farḍ*, *sunna* and *wājib* parts, Allah the All-Benevolent will reward him with the rewards He grants to His heavenly hosts who worship Him thus since the day they were created. And He will raise him up as one of His intimates, and admit him into the company of His saints.



The Twelve Farā'id of Prayer

These are the twelve binding requirements in Muslim prayer:

1. To be cleansed of any impure substance issuing from the body, and to be in a state of ritual purity (i. e. to have *wuḍū'*).
2. One's clothing and the place of prayer must be clean and unpolluted by impurities, such as blood, excrement, urine, semen etc.).
3. The time of prayer: it is important to pray each prayer within its period; a prayer that is prayed before the *adbān* is sounded needs to be repeated.
4. To stand facing the *qibla*, (the direction of the Ka'ba at Mecca); one must take care to ascertain which is the right direction (by means of a compass, for instance).
5. To cover the parts of the body that must be kept covered in public according to the law of *sharī'a*, the *'awra*. For men this means the area between the navel and the lower rim of the kneecap; for women it means the entire body, excepting the face, the hands, and the feet. It is important for the hair to be completely covered, a woman must cover her head from the roots of the hair on her forehead, including the ears and the area under her chin. The sleeves should be long enough to cover her wrists, and her ankles must be covered by her garment.

6. To make the intention for performing that prayer. It is necessary to make express intention for performing the *fard* or *sunna* of the prayer of a certain time of day.

These are the six conditions for prayer that must be met before the actual prayer can begin. The following six requirements concern the prayer itself and are termed the “pillars of prayer”.

7. *Takkīr*, to pronounce the words “*Allāhu akbar*”; the hands are raised, palms facing away from the body; men raise their hands above their shoulders, their thumbs catching behind the earlobes, while women raise their hands high enough for the finger tips to be level with the shoulders. Both the face and the hands should be facing the *qibla*.
8. *Qiyām*, the standing position of prayer, the right hand clasped over the left. One should always try to maintain the standing position, since a prayer performed while sitting down receives only half the reward.
9. *Qirāʾa*, to recite *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* and an additional sura of the Qurʾān;
10. *Rukūʿ*, to bow from the waist with stretched arms and hands covering the kneecaps. The back should be held straight, horizontal if possible. If a bowl of water were placed on it, it should not spill.
11. *Sajda*, prostration; in *sajda* seven parts of the body touch the ground: the forehead, the palms of the hand, the knees and the tips of the toes. The elbows should not touch the ground. The hands are positioned at just such a distance from each other that the face can be placed between it. Men keep their elbows at an angle away from their body, while women press them closer to the trunk; the elbows

should press against the thighs. In general, a woman's position should be more crouching, that is to say, the backside should be brought down close to the heels.

12. The *qa'ada*, kneeling, at the conclusion of the prayer while reciting the *du'ā'* of *at-tabiyyāt*.

These are the *farḍ*-conditions of the prayer. Apart from these there are many fine points concerning the *sunna* and *wājib* of the prayer.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said about the prayer: "Prayer is Allah's good pleasure, it is the *sunna* of the prophets, the love of the angels, the root of all knowledge and the source of faith. Prayer is what causes intercession to be accepted, it is the blessing upon lawful earnings and a weapon against the enemy."

A Muslim's prayer is what the accursed Shayṭān hates most of all. Prayer is the intercessor between a Muslim soul and the angel of Death. When Azrā'il ﷺ approaches to take a man's soul, his prayer rises up to intercede for him so that he might be spared the pangs of death. Prayer is a light in the grave, and on the Day of Resurrection it will shade him. Prayer is a crown upon his head and a robe upon his body. It is as a veil between a Muslim and Hell, and also as a net, with which he can drag his good deeds before the Divine Presence. It is a Muslim's guarantor before his Lord, and the cause for his safe traversing across the Bridge of Ṣirāṭ. Prayer is the key to Paradise.

The Holy Prophet said: "On the Last Day a creature will escape from Hell. This creature is named Harish. It will have the body of a huge scorpion, and it will be as high as heaven is from earth, and as long as East is from West. Jibrīl ﷺ will speak to this creature, and say to it, 'Ey, Harish, where are you going, whom do you seek?' And Harish will answer, 'I am

on the way to ‘Arafāt where five types of Muslims shall be delivered unto me: those who neglected their prayers; those who did not give their *zakāt*; those who disobeyed their parents; those who did not abstain from drinking alcohol; and finally those who would talk of worldly affairs within the mosques.’

Therefore it is written:

*The places of worship belong to Allah,
so call not, along with Allah,
upon anyone.” (72:18)*

About Wuḍū' (ritual ablution)

There are four obligatory requirements (*farā'id*) for *wuḍū'*:

- 1) Face: It is *farḍ* to wash the face once from the roots of the hair above the forehead, from the cheeks to the ears, and beneath the chin. To wash the face twice is *wājib*, to wash it thrice is *sunna*.
- 2) Hands and arms: It is *farḍ* to wash the hands and forearms up to the elbow once. To wash them twice is *wājib*, to wash them thrice is *sunna*. Care must be taken to wet the whole arm at the first washing, not a single hair must be left dry.
- 3) Head: One passes one's wet fingers over the front quarter of the head, spreading the fingers as one does so, in order to wet the roots of the hair and the scalp.
- 4) Feet: The feet are washed up to the ankles, including the ankles, the heel and the spaces between the toes.

Why is it obligatory (*farḍ*) to wash these four parts of the body? When our father Adam عليه السلام dwelt in Paradise with Eve, his wife, she gave him to taste of the forbidden fruit. He walked up to it with his feet, turned his face toward it to look at it, stretched out his hand to take it, and after he had eaten of it, he clapped his hand upon his forehead from remorse. That is why it was made *farḍ* to wash these four parts of the body before praying, so that no sin might adhere to them.

It is *sunna* to rinse mouth and nose three times. During the washing of the mouth it is also *sunna* to make the resolve to speak no bad words, lies or slander. While rinsing the nose, one intends to cleanse it from all unpleasant smells one has willingly or unwillingly inhaled. While washing the face, one hopes to wash away all the forbidden looks and impressions one may have received. One washes one's hands and repents of all the unlawful things one may have touched or handled. And at the washing of the feet one regrets every step one may have taken towards that which is hateful to Allah Almighty.

It is very important to take care that no part of skin or hair remains dry during this ablution of *wuḍū'*. When passing the hands over the head, one inserts one's little fingers into the ears (without wetting the fingers again), and the thumbs pass behind the ears. With the three remaining fingers, one swipes along the nape of the neck. Whoever succeeds in adopting this *sunna*, will be made safe from all manner of punishment on the Day of Judgment, such as the molten lead that is poured into the sinners' ears, or the hooks minions of Hell use to drag the sinners into the Fire.

Whoever prays two *raka'āt* after this ritual ablution to honour his *wuḍū'*, Allah will render him pure and free of sin as a newborn babe, *inshā' Allāh*.

The Holy Prophet once said: "On the Day of Judgment Allah Almighty will grant the nation of Muḥammad ﷺ the qualities of excellence of four prophets for their having had to wash four parts of their bodies in their ritual ablutions. For having washed their faces, He will grant them the beauty of Yūsuf ؑ, they will all be radiant with his light and beauty. For having washed their hands, He will place their books of accounts into their right hands as He Almighty said to Mūsā ؑ: 'Take hold of it with your right hand.' For washing their heads, he will grant them a

crown of splendour, such as He granted to the prophet-king Sulaymān عليه السلام. And for that they have washed their feet, He will let them ride upon the *burāq*, such as the Holy Prophet Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم rode upon when he ascended to the heavens. And on it He will bring them to the Place of Gathering.”

On ghusl (ritual bathing)

There are three *farḍ* actions to be observed while performing ghusl.

- 1) The first is to wash in the same way as after going to the toilet;
- 2) The second is to make *wuḍūʿ*, rinsing nose and mouth three times each;
- 3) The third is to pour water over the whole body three times. First water is poured over the right half, then over the left half of the body, then over the head. Alternatively, one can start with the washing of the head. This is repeated three times, but every part of the body must already be wet after the first pouring of water, this is *farḍ*. The second and third washing are also *farḍ*.

One does not need to repeat *ghusl* daily, only when it has become necessary (after the end of a woman’s menstrual period, after sexual relations etc., or to fulfil the *sunna* of taking *ghusl* before attending the *jum‘a* prayer. Ghusl is always performed in the way just described.

The Postures of Prayer

When a person has made his *wuḍūʿ* and stands before his Lord in prayer, the Lord says to him, “O My servant, I am your Lord and you are My servant. You approach Me through various kinds of devotions, and I shall not deny you the manifold pleasures of Paradise, for prayer is also called ‘the wedding feast of worship’.” – What does ‘wedding feast’ mean in this context? Prayer is constituted of many postures and positions, consists of standing, of speaking, of bowing, and prostration. One who prays is entirely consumed by his prayer, his whole heart and mind are involved in it. Therefore it is termed a ‘wedding feast’.

When we pray, we pronounce the *takbīr* (*Allāhu akbar*), and after that we move not a single step, we remain motionless, with hands folded, we remain standing in one place, our eyes are fixed upon the place of the *sajda*, our tongue speaks nothing but the sacred words of the Qurʾān – all our limbs concentrate on the prayer and participate in it.

احمد A-H-M-D

The *qiyām* (standing) corresponds to the *alif*

The *rukūʿ* (bowing) corresponds to the *hāʾ*

The *sajda* (prostration) corresponds to the *mīm*

The *qaʿada* (kneeling) corresponds to the *dāl*

In the *qiyām* of the prayer (the standing position) the human body has the shape of the Arabic letter “*alif*”, a straight line and the first letter of the Divine Name “Allāh”. We thereby signify that we are the servants of Allah. When we prostrate in *sajda*, our body forms the letters of the name of our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ: our head being the initial “*mīm*”, our folded trunk the “*ḥā*”, our knees the second “*mīm*”, while our upright feet form the “*dāl*”. In this way we express that we belong to the nation of the most honoured Prophet Muḥammad, wherefore we praise and thank Allah.

محمد M-Ḥ-M-D

For this reason, a person is never thrown into Hell in his human form. But whosoever remains steadfast in his five daily prayers, he will be raised up from the dead in his human form.

The Holy Prophet said: “In my nation there are people whose prayer is not accepted:

- 1) those who pray without reciting the ‘*Fātiḥa*’;
- 2) those who pray but do not give their *zakāt*;
- 3) one who acts as *imām* for his community, but is not welcomed by them;
- 4) a disobedient slave;
- 5) an incorrigible tippler (a habitual drinker of wine);
- 6) a woman whose husband is displeased with her;
- 7) a woman who does not sufficiently cover herself;
- 8) a person who prays but whose prayer does not keep him from committing unlawful acts.”

On Judgment Day his prayer will be flung in his face like an old rag, because it is written:

Verily, prayer protects from indecency and evil ... (29:45).

The prayer that does not protect him from unlawful and improper actions, is a worthless prayer and has not been accepted by Allah – may Allah preserve us!

Four Points to Observe

‘**Ā**’isha عليها السلام, the wife of the Holy Prophet relates: “One day the Holy Prophet came to me as I was just preparing to go to bed, and he said, ‘O ‘Ā’isha, you must do *four things*: first of all you must read the whole Qur’ān (read a *kbatm*); secondly you must secure the intercession of all the prophets; thirdly you must take care that your parents and all the Muslims with them are pleased with you; and fourthly, you must go on Ḥajj and ‘Umra.’ He then stood to pray, and I was confused and pondered what he had told me.

When he had completed his prayer, I asked him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, you have recommended that I do these four things, but time is very short, how shall I be able to perform all of them?’ Then the Holy Prophet smiled and said, ‘O ‘Ā’isha, if you read the *Sūrat al-Ikblās (Qul bū ...)* three times before going to sleep, it will be as if you had read the entire Qur’ān. And if you recite this *du‘ā’* (supplication), every prophet who appears before you on the Day of Judgment will intercede for you:

*Allābumma ṣalli ‘alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin
wa ‘alā Sayyidina Ādama
wa ‘ala Sayyidinā Nūḥin
wa ‘alā Sayyidinā ‘Īsā
wa mā baynabum mina n-nabiīnā wa l-mursalīn
ṣalawātu llābi wa salāmun ‘alayhim ajma‘īn.*

O Allah, blessings be upon Sayyidinā Muḥammad,
and upon Sayyidinā Ādam
and upon Sayyidinā Nūḥ,
and upon Sayyidinā ‘Īsā,
and however many prophets and messengers
came in the time between,
Allah’s blessings and peace be upon them all.

Thirdly, if you recite this verse, you will be assured of the good pleasure of your parents and of all Muslims in general:

*Rabbānā gḥfir lī wa li-wālidayya
wa li-l-mu‘minīna yawma yaqūmu l-ḥisāb.*

Our Lord, grant me pardon and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning comes to pass. (14:41)

And fourthly, if you recite this prayer, you will receive the rewards of having performed Ḥajj and ‘Umra:

*Subḥāna llābi wa l-ḥamdu li-llābi
wa lā ilāha illā llāhu wa-llāhu akbar
wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-llābi l-‘aliyyi l-‘azīm.*

Glory be to Allah. And praise be to Allah.
And there is no god except Allah. And Allah is the Greatest. And there is no power and no strength except with Allah, the Most High, And Most Great.’”

About Ṣalawāt, Prayers of Praise On the Holy Prophet

After any mention of the Holy Prophet's name, it is common practice to pronounce an epithet of praise upon him, most frequently *ṣalla llābu ‘alayhi wa ṣallam*, which means: May Allah bless him and give him peace, or *‘alayhi ṣ-salātu wa ṣ-salām*, blessings and peace be upon him. It is also recommended to repeat as often as possible this epithet of praise upon the Prophet, a devotional exercise referred to as *‘ṣalawāt*', which is very meritorious as many *aḥādīth* testify.

IBN ‘ABD AR-RAḤMĀN IBN ‘AWF رضي الله عنه relates that the Holy Prophet once said, "Allah says: 'As soon as one of your nation begins to recite *ṣalawāt* upon you, o Muḥammad, seventy thousand heavenly angels begin to pray for him and ask for forgiveness on his behalf. He for whom the angels pray is surely deserving of Paradise.'"

IBN MAS‘ŪD رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet once said: "He who recites the most *ṣalawāt* upon me, he is dearest to me, and him I love the most."

And he ﷺ said: "Whoever recites one hundred *ṣalawāt* for me on the day of *jum‘a*, will be pardoned for his sins, and be they as numerous as the foam upon the waves."

One day a young man came before the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet asked his close friend and companion Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه to give him his place by his side. When the young man had departed, he begged Abū Bakr's pardon for this, saying, "O

Abū Bakr, forgive me for having given this youth preference over you. There is no one in my community who recites more *ṣalawāt* upon me than you do, but the *ṣalawāt* which this young man recites is the most lovely I have ever heard.”

They then asked of the Holy Prophet what were the words of the *ṣalawāt* that the young man recited, and the Holy Prophet told them, “In the morning and in the evening he says:

‘O Allah, bless Muḥammad and his family
in everyone who blesses him;
O Allah, bless Muḥammad and his family
in everyone who does not bless him;
O Allah, bless Muḥammad and his family,
as Thou art pleased to approve for him;
O Allah, bless Muḥammad and his family,
even as it is meet that he should be blessed.’

Therefore, O Abū Bakr, I asked you to cede the place of honour to him.”

– This version of the *ṣalawāt* is also contained in the text of the *Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt* by Jazūlī. –

The Excellence of the Nation of Muḥammad ﷺ

n the Day of Judgement all men will be summoned by the names of their prophets. But Allah Almighty will give special honours to the nation of Muḥammad ﷺ alone, by summoning them as His friends, when He calls calling to them “*Yā awliyā’ya*, O My intimate Friends!”

All Praise and thanks be to Allah for all that has been and all that is to come, peace and blessings be upon His chosen Prophet, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, and blessings of Allah be upon all believers! Āmīn, Āmīn, Āmīn.

Wa min Allāb at-tawfiq



Special Prayers and Recitals During the Holy Months

Rajab

Daily:

2500	<i>Istaghfiru llāb</i>
1000	<i>Lā ilāba illā llāb</i>
100	<i>Lā ilāba illā llāb, Muḥammadu r-rasūlu llāb</i>

Throughout the month:

30 pairs of two *raka'āt*: after the *Fātiḥa* one recites *Qul yā ayyubā l-kāfirūn* (Sūra 109), followed by three *Ikblās* (*Qul hū ...*, Sūra 112)

16,000 *Yā Laṭīf* – The Subtle One

1st – 10th of *Rajab*:

100 *Subḥāna llāb al-ḥayy al-qayyūm*
Glory be to Allāh, the Ever Living One,
the Self-Existing One

11th – 20th of *Rajab*:

100 *Subḥāna llāb al-aḥad al-ṣamad*
Glory be to Allāh, the One, the Satisfier of
All Needs

21st – 30th of *Rajab*:

100 *Subḥāna llāb al-ra'ūf*
Glory be to Allāh, the Clement

Sha‘bān

Daily:

- 100 *Istaghfiru llāb*
2500 *Allābumma ṣalli ‘ala Muḥammadin
wa ‘ala āli Muḥammadin wa sallim*
1000 *Lā ilāha illā llāb*
100 *Lā ilāha illā llāb, Muḥammadu r-rasūlu llāb*

Ramaḍān

Daily:

- 1000 *Qul hū (Sūra 112)*
1000 *Lā ilāha illā llāb*
100 *Lā ilāha illā llāb, Muḥammadu r-rasūlu llāb*

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May Allah fulfill Mawlana’s intention that this book serve Islam and

bring benefit to those searching for the straight way.” (from the Preface by MEHMET NAZİM ADIL)

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*

The noble Prophet, *salla llābu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, left the religion of Islam for his nation. And we should know: „Faith in Allah is the greatest source of strength for us, and an inexhaustible powerhouse.”

DAWRIYA:
KEEPING COMPANY WITH A SAINTby NABIL IBRAHIM
160 pages, paperback, 2016
ISBN 978-9963-40-124-6

دورية

“MAWLANA SHEIKH NAZIM AL-HAQQANI moved from this world to the next on Wednesday the 7th of May, 2014, the 8th of Rajab, 1435 AH. This event left most of us simply speechless, struck dumb, stunned and tearless, in the depths of our loss. Nabil, however, found the voice to speak, the words to express something of the love and gratitude we all feel for an incomparable Master. And beyond that, he had some really practical advice on how we can adjust to our new reality, advice about the right attitude with which to face the future. To put it simply, the Sheikh is not dead, keep your eyes on the Sheikh.

Nabil’s memories, his understandings are, of course, inimitably his. When you read these articles you see the world through his eyes. This is Nabil’s picture of a Saint whose greatest miracle was being able to be everything to everyone. However perceptive, this is only a piece of the puzzle to which each one of us is in possession of a different piece. But the love he so powerfully gives voice to, is ours, all of ours, the same. [...] We are left with this book – a tribute both to the Master and to the murid.” (KARIMA SPERLING, Editor)

EXTRACT FROM THE TEXT:

“Mawlana was told about the story of Sidi ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir was asked, ‘Who is the *quṭbu l-waqt* – the Pole of the time?’

من هو قطب الوقت؟
man huwa quṭbu l-waqt?

He replied: ‘You go to a dergah and find that the sheikh and his followers are at peace and everything is in order and organized. There you can kiss the sheikh’s hand for blessings and go on your way. However, you reach another dergah and find everything upside down. The sheikh is shouting at his murids, the followers are testing each other constantly in a rough manner, there is no clear or apparent order, and you can’t find any system to follow because everything is constantly changing. Then, and only then, make sure you take bay‘a, give your oath of allegiance to that sheikh, for he is the Pole of the time.’

Mawlana used to laugh hearing this story being told by Sheikh Bahauddin. Anyone who has come to visit Mawlana will see some similarity between this story and their personal experience during their visit [...]”

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