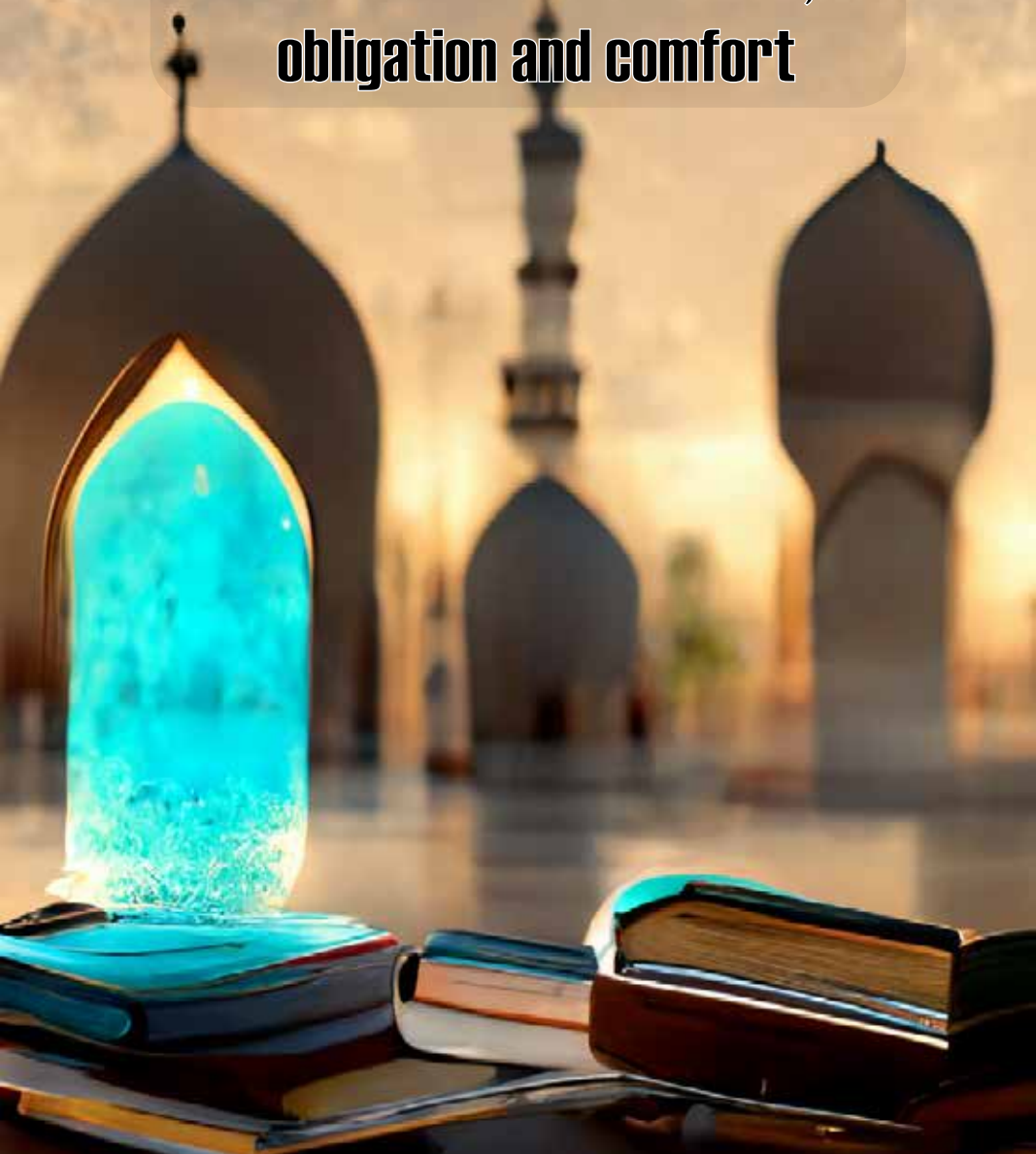


**The month of Ramadhan,  
obligation and comfort**



## **The month of Ramadhân, obligation and comfort**

All praise is due to Allâh ﷻ who prescribed fasting for the believers in a certain noble month, therein He designated a night that is better than a thousand months. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allâh ﷻ Alone, having no partners. All praise is for Him and the dominion belongs to Him. To Him belong the creation, the Commandment, the might and the power. I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is His slave and Messenger. Allâh ﷻ says:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لِمَلَّكُمْ تَنَفُّونَ ۗ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ ﴾

“O you who believe! Observing *As-Saum* (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become *Al-Muttaqûn* (pious, god fearing). Observing *Saum* (fasts) is for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days.” (2:183,184)

O servants of Allâh! Fasting for the sake of Allâh ﷻ is such a virtuous form of worship. No one but Allâh ﷻ wholly realizes its reward. Fasting the month of Ramadhân is one of the pillars of Islam. Allâh ﷻ has prescribed it for the believers to become a shield, mercy, benevolence and a cause of good health for them. It is to be performed in a manner that shall revive and awaken the feeling of *Taqwa* (fearing Allâh ﷻ) in their hearts and repress the fervor of their lusts and whims. Consequently, they shall attain the benefits and advantages of this spiritual experience in all fields: social, moral and health. For this reason Allâh ﷻ concluded the aforementioned verse with:

﴿ لِمَلَّكُمْ تَنَفُّونَ ۗ ﴾

“...So that you may have *Taqwa*.” (2:183)

Allâh ﷻ being the All-Merciful, All-Kind, has made it easy for the

Muslims to fast the month of Ramadhân. Firstly, He pointed out that fasting, being a form of worship, was not decreed as an obligatory duty upon man for the first time; Allâh ﷻ had prescribed it before for other nations. In regard to this Allâh ﷻ said:

﴿ كَمَا تَبَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَنْفُونَ ﴾

“...as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become *Al-Muttaqûn*.” (2:183)

Having known that, the Muslim shall feel more comfortable in accepting this obligation and be encouraged and strive to practice fasting at its best. Secondly, Allâh ﷻ referred to the month of Ramadhân as

﴿ أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ ﴾

“a fixed number of days.” (2:184)

That are fasted consecutively and finish quickly. Think about this month that a Muslim only fasts its days compared to the whole year with its days and nights spent through indulging in the permissible desires and joys which are granted to us by Allâh ﷻ, the All Generous, the All-Merciful. What shall the ratio be? Thirdly, Allâh ﷻ has made it permissible for old people who are unable to fast to break their fast and feed a needy person in atonement for each day, that is if they find a needy person. Allâh ﷻ says:

﴿ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ ﴾

“And as for those who can fast with difficulty (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a *Miskîn* (poor person) (for every day).” (2:184)

Ibn Abbas رضى الله عنهما commented on this verse saying:

“It (i.e. the verse) is not abrogated; it is for the old who cannot fast.” (*Al-Bukhâri*)

The same is applied to the terminally ill people. The pregnant and nursing women, if they fear that harm will befall the baby or fetus

when they fast, or, if they are afraid for themselves, they may break their fast and make up for the days they miss later.

Fourthly, Allâh ﷻ has made the month of Ramadhân a month of worship in which all forms of worship are being practiced. It is then a time for the believer to increase his reward by doing every form of worship permissible such as recitation of Qur'ân, *Dhiker* (supplication, making mention of Allâh), prayer, *Duâ* (invocation to the Lord), and so forth. All Muslims worldwide, from many different origins, nationalities, poor and rich, come together to worship Allâh ﷻ intensively in this month. In the villages, in the cities, in the country, in every house and every tent, Ramadhân is being lived. There shall be no differences, no chaos and no pride in one's opinion. Everyone is fasting in this month of Ramadhân, in which the sacred book of Allâh ﷻ (Al-Qur'ân) was revealed to the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. Fifthly, Allâh ﷻ has made it permissible for husbands and wives to resume their sexual life after sunset, as well as to eat and drink. People can still enjoy their food and their spouses whether they have slept before that or not. In the beginning, people were not allowed to eat, drink, or have sexual intercourse if they had slept before breaking fast after sunset. This caused a lot of hardship for some of them, so Allâh ﷻ made it easier for them and allowed them to satisfy their hunger thirst and desire throughout the whole night in Ramadhân. Allâh ﷻ said:

﴿ أَجَلَ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصَّيَامِ الرَّفْتُ إِلَىٰ نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِيَاسٍ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِيَاسٍ لَهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ فَالْتَقَ بِهِمْ رَوْحَهُمْ وَابْتَعُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَبَيِّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُوا الصَّيَامَ إِلَىٰ اللَّيْلِ ﴾

“It is made lawful for you to have sexual relations with your wives on the night of *As-Saum* (the fasts). They are *Libâs* [i.e. body-cover, or screen, or *Sakan* (i.e. you enjoy the pleasure of living with them — as in Verse 7:189) *Tafsir At-Tabarî*] for you and you are the same for them. Allâh knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He turned to you (accepted your

repentance) and forgave you. So now have sexual relations with them and seek that which Allâh has ordained for you (offspring), and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your *Saum* (fast) till the nightfall.” (2:187)

This and other issues demonstrate that Allâh ﷻ has made this obligation easy to fulfill. Allâh ﷻ said:

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ الْوَالِدِ وَالْوَالِدَاتِ كَمَا يَدْرَأُونَ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَيْتُم مِّن شَايِئٍ خَبِيرٌ﴾

“Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allâh [i.e. to say *Takbîr* (*Allâhu Akbar*: Allâh is the Most Great)] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.” (2:185)

Fasting is to abstain from eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, and whatever they entail, with a pure intention for the sake of Allâh ﷻ from the break of the dawn until sunset. Moreover, fasting becomes more perfect and complete if the prohibitions in general and sins are also averted. In this regard the Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ فَلَيْسَ لِي حَاجَةٌ فِي أَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ» .

“Allâh does not need someone to abstain from eating and drinking while, at the same time, he is involved in lying and carrying out falsehood.”

Fasting was first decreed as a mandatory form of worship in the second year of the *Hijra*. When the Prophet ﷺ passed away, he had fasted nine months of Ramadhân. The beginning of Ramadhân can be observed with two things:

The sighting of the crescent of the month of Ramadhân. Allâh ﷻ says:

﴿فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ﴾

“So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadhân i.e., is present at his home), he must observe *Saum* (fasts) that month.” (2:185)

The completion of 30 days of the previous month of Sha‘ban which is the eighth month in the *Hijri* calendar. In this regard the Prophet ﷺ said:

«فَإِنْ غُمَّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمِلُوا عِدَّةَ شَعْبَانَ ثَلَاثِينَ يَوْمًا» .

“... If the weather is cloudy [i.e., as you try to sight the moon], then complete the month of Sha‘ban at thirty days.”

In this respect, the phases of the moon, its height, or the crescent size shall not be considered in the beginning of the month or its end. The occident and the onsets of the moon alternate and both depend on the planets travelling in the galaxy. It is noteworthy to say that the Prophet ﷺ never relied on the phases of the moon or the size of the crescent in his ruling regarding starting or ending Ramadhân. He did not even consider them in this issue. He, instead, focused on sighting the crescent. He ﷺ said:

«صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَيْهِ وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤْيَيْهِ، فَإِنْ غُمَّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمِلُوا عِدَّةَ شَعْبَانَ ثَلَاثِينَ يَوْمًا» .

“Observe fast on sighting the moon [of Ramadhân] and terminate it on sighting the moon [of Shawwal]. However, if it is cloudy then complete the month of Sha‘ban at thirty days.”

The Muslim must receive this great month happily and gratefully, while praising and thanking Allâh ﷻ and with full readiness and a pure intention to practice all forms of worship in this month. He must look forward to spending the days of this month fasting and reciting Qur’ân and the nights praying, supplicating, and invoking Allâh ﷻ. The Prophet ﷺ used to give the great tidings of the advent of Ramadhân to his Companions saying:

“The month of Ramadhân has come about. It is a month of blessings that Allâh ﷻ has decreed to be mandatory upon you to

fast its days. In it, the gates of Heavens are opened, the gates of Hell are closed; and the devils are chained. In it, there is a night that is better than a thousand months. Whoever is deprived from its goodness is indisputably deprived.”

We ask Allâh ﷻ not to deprive us from this goodness and to bestow upon us the virtues of this blessed night.

With this I conclude my speech and ask Allâh ﷻ, the Almighty, to forgive all of our sins. So seek His forgiveness, for He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.