

# FASTING - THE SPECIAL IBĀDAH OF RAMADHĀN

*“O you who believe! Fasting has been ordained upon you as it was ordained upon those before you, so that you may attain Taqwā (piety).” (Qur’ān Karīm, 2/183)*

The blessed month of Ramadhān has arrived! The month in which Allah Ta’āla has made fasting compulsory by day and Tarawīh Salāh sunnah by night.

Nabi Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam explained the great virtue that Allāh Ta'ālā has attached to fasting, saying: “Allāh Ta'ālā says: “Every action of the son of Ādam is for himself except fasting - for verily (fasting) is for Me, and I shall recompense him for it...” (Bukhāri, 1904)

Even though all actions are done for Allāh Ta'ālā, the 'Ibādah of fasting has been singled out in this particular Hadith as being solely for Allah Ta'āla.

Ulama have mentioned several reasons for this specification:

- In fasting, one abstains from permissible desires for a prolonged period. Such abstention, solely for Allāh Ta'ālā, isn't found in any other 'Ibādah. In Ihrām, one abstains from specific desires but may eat and drink. In Salāh, he abstains from his desires, but for a short period. While fasting, one must constantly suppress his desire for the pleasure of Allāh Ta'ālā alone. It is only befitting that Allāh Ta'ālā alone rewards him!

Such abstention is a sure sign of Īmān. The pious of the past would say: “Glad tidings to the one who abstains from desires which are present, (in preparation) for a promised time that he hasn't seen (the Day of Qiyāmah!).”

Our abstention from permissible desires should inculcate within us the ability to avoid impermissible ones. After all, the purpose behind fasting is to inculcate Taqwa (the fear of Allah).

- Fasting is a secret between a slave and his Rabb. Fasting comprises a person's intention and subsequent abstention from food and drink. No one knows whether another person is fasting or not. A person might secretly break his fast, and no one would know.

Therefore, to complete the fast is a sign of Īmān and sincerity. Allāh Ta'ālā loves this act of His slave and will specifically reward him for it.

We should keep these beautiful virtues and objectives of fasting in front of us while observing the fasts of Ramadhān. If we do this, we will attain the full benefit of fasting.

On the other hand, if we fast just to fulfil our obligation without understanding it to be a great 'Ibādah, we may miss out on the great spiritual benefits that should have accrued.

Besides those truly exempt from fasting, it is totally incorrect for anyone else to skip the fasts of Ramadhān. Minor illnesses, examinations, etc, are not valid excuses for missing the fasts of Ramadhān.

In addition, we should endeavour to increase our other 'Ibādāt. Nabi Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam would recite much Qur'ān Karīm during Ramadhān, stand in extra Salāh, and give a tremendous amount of charity!

May Allāh Ta'ālā grant us the essence and full reward of this Mubārak month and all 'Ibādāt, Āmīn!

