



← RULINGS OF →
ISLAMIC LAW
A SIMPLIFIED PRESENTATION



◆ CHAPTER 5: ◆

FASTING



Chapter 5

Fasting

Linguistically speaking, fasting means abstention from something. In an Islamic context, it means intentional abstention from eating and drinking, as well as all that invalidates fasting, from the break of dawn until sunset with the intention of worshipping Allah.²⁷⁹

The spiritual concept of fasting

1. Fasting is a means of expressing one's gratitude for Allah's blessings. It stops a person from eating, drinking and sex, which are some of Allah's great blessings. To refrain from them for a considerable time is to show one's appreciation of these blessings. An aspect of Allah's grace may be taken for granted, or people may be oblivious to it, until it is denied, and people will then know its importance. They will then recognize Allah's grace and feel grateful for it. To express gratitude for Allah's blessings is a duty that is required logically and from the Islamic viewpoint. Allah refers to it in the verse that imposes the duty of fasting the month of Ramadan, telling us that the fulfilment of this duty is the way 'to tender your thanks' (2: 185).

²⁷⁹ Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 3, p. 84; al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina* [, vol. 2, p. 348.

2. Fasting is a means to maintain a God-fearing attitude. When a person abstains from what is lawful in order to please Allah and in fear of His punishment, that person willingly refrains from what is forbidden. This means that fasting leads one to steer away from what Allah has prohibited. Fasting is indeed made a duty for us in order to nurture this feeling of fearing Allah, as He says: ‘Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing’ (2: 183).
3. Fasting overcomes desire. When man eats a full meal, he thinks of satisfying other desires. When he is hungry, other desires take a secondary place in his interests. The Prophet (peace be upon him) advises young people saying: ‘Young men, whoever of you can afford marriage should get married, because marriage will help him lower his gaze and maintain his chastity. The one who is unable to get married may fast, as fasting provides protection [against sin].’²⁸⁰ This shows that fasting is a means that helps man to refrain from sin.²⁸¹
4. Fasting encourages people to be compassionate and kind to those who are in need. When a person fasts and experiences hunger for a long time he will remember his feelings and he will be more willing to be charitable to people who are poor and in need of help. His kindness to such people will earn him rich reward from Allah.

²⁸⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 5,065; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,400.

²⁸¹ A. al-Kasani, *Bada'i al-Sana'i*, vol. 2, pp. 75–6.

5. Fasting puts the rich and the poor on the same level, as they will all bear the same pain of hunger. This increases one's reward.²⁸²
6. Fasting helps to overcome the temptation presented by Satan, who exploits human desires to lead people away from Allah's path, and such desires are always stronger when one eats and drinks. Safiyyah reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Satan has his way with a human being like his own blood.'²⁸³
7. Fasting serves as spiritual purification, purging one's soul of any negative thoughts or values. Fasting helps man to disregard the fleeting pleasures of this life and to look for the lasting happiness in the life to come.

Conditions: The following conditions must apply for the duty of fasting to be valid:

1. Being a Muslim: Fasting is not valid if it is done by an unbeliever. It is an act of worship, and worship cannot be offered by an unbeliever. When an unbeliever embraces Islam, he or she is not required to fast for previous years.
2. Puberty: Fasting is not required of anyone who has not attained the age when Islamic worship applies, which is the attainment of puberty. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Three are exempt from duties...'²⁸⁴ One of these is a child until attaining puberty. However, if a child

²⁸² Al-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir*, vol. 2, p. 233.

²⁸³ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 7,171; Muslim, *hadith* No. 2,174.

²⁸⁴ Related by at-Tirmidhi, Book 17, *hadith* No. 1

below this age understands actions and requirements and fasts, that fast is accepted. Fathers and guardians will do well to encourage such children to fast so as to be familiar with fasting.

3. Sanity: Fasting is not required of an insane or mentally disabled person.
4. Sound health: A person who is ill and cannot fast is not required to fast. However, if he or she fasts, their fast is valid. Allah says: ‘He who is ill or on a journey shall fast instead the same number of days later on’ (2: 185). When a person who is ill in Ramadan recovers and is back in good health, he should compensate for not fasting during his illness by fasting the same number of days that were missed.
5. Being in one’s place of residence: A person who is on a journey is not required to fast. However, if he or she fasts, their fast is valid. Allah says: ‘He who is ill or on a journey shall fast instead the same number of days later on’ (2: 185). When a person who undertakes a journey in Ramadan, and avails himself of the concession not to fast, is back in his hometown, he should compensate for not fasting during his travel by fasting the same number of days.
6. Women who are in their period or having postnatal bleeding may not fast. In fact, fasting is prohibited for women during the menstrual and postnatal periods. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated this clearly.²⁸⁵ However, they must fast the same number of days later.

²⁸⁵ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 304.

[A’ishah said: ‘We used to have these periods and we were ordered to fast in compensation, but no compensation for prayer was required.’²⁸⁶

Essentials: The definition of fasting in Islamic usage makes clear that it has two basic *rukns*. The first is the abstention from anything that invalidates fasting from the break of dawn until sunset. This is based on the Qur’anic verse that includes: ‘Eat and drink until you can see the white streak of dawn against the blackness of the night. Then resume the fast till nightfall’ (2: 187). The second *rukhn* is that a person intends this abstention as an act of worship. It is intention that distinguishes whether a particular deed is one of worship or an ordinary action. Intention also distinguishes between acts of worship. A fast may be an obligatory worship, as in the case of fasting in Ramadan, or it may be a different fast. This *rukhn* is based on the *hadith* in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Actions are but by intention and every person shall have but that which he intended.’²⁸⁷

Status: Allah has given us the binding duty of fasting the month of Ramadan, making it one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith. He says: ‘Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing’ (2: 183). He also says: ‘The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur’an, a guidance for the

²⁸⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 321; Muslim, *hadith* No. 335.

²⁸⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,907.

people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it.’ (2: 185).

[Abdullah ibn [Umar reports that he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: ‘Islam has been built on five pillars: testifying that there is no deity other than Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), attending regularly to the prayers, paying the zakat, fasting in Ramadan and making the pilgrimage to the Sacred House if one is able to undertake the journey.’²⁸⁸ Furthermore, Talhah ibn [Ubaydillah reported that a Bedouin with dishevelled hair said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): ‘O Messenger of Allah, tell me what fasting Allah has made obligatory to me.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘The month of Ramadan.’ The man asked: ‘Anything else?’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘No, unless you wish to volunteer something...’²⁸⁹

The Muslim community is unanimous that fasting the month of Ramadan is obligatory, and that it is one of the pillars of Islam, essentially known to all Muslims, and that anyone who denies this obligation is an unbeliever or an apostate. This means that the obligation of fasting is confirmed by the Qur’an, the Sunnah and the unanimity of Muslims. Muslims also unanimously agree that anyone who denies it is an unbeliever.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 8; Muslim, *hadith* No. 16.

²⁸⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 46; Muslim, *hadith* No. 11.

²⁹⁰ Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 3, p. 84.

Confirmation of the start of Ramadan

As Ramadan is a lunar month, its beginning is determined by the sighting of the new moon. Thus, if someone sights the new moon himself, or confirms its sighting by a Muslim person of integrity, or gets to know of it, the month is deemed to have started. This is implied by the divine order: ‘So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it.’ (2: 185). The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘When you have sighted the new moon, fast.’²⁹¹ Ibn [Umar reports: ‘I told the Prophet (peace be upon him) that I sighted the new moon of Ramadan and he fasted and ordered people to fast.’²⁹²

If the new moon is not sighted, and no Muslim testifies to sighting it, it becomes obligatory to complete the preceding month, Sha [ban 30 days. The beginning of Ramadan can only be confirmed by one of these two ways: the sighting of the new moon or completing the month of Sha [ban 30 days. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Begin fasting when you have sighted the new moon and finish your fasting when you have sighted the new moon. If it is too cloudy, you are otherwise unable to sight it, then complete the month of Sha [ban 30 days.’²⁹³ The end of the month of Ramadan is also determined by the sighting of the new moon of Shawwal, with two acceptable Muslims testifying to the fact. If two witnesses do not testify, then Ramadan must be completed 30 days.

²⁹¹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,900; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,080.

²⁹² Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 2,342; al-Darimi, *hadith* No. 1,733; Ibn Hibban, *hadith* No. 3,447; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 585.

²⁹³ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,909; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,081



When the intention should be formed

A person who fasts must intend to fast, for the intention is a *rukhn* of fasting, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Actions are but by intention. Every person shall have but that which he has intended.’ In obligatory fasting, such as the fasting in Ramadan, atonement for some misdeed, compensatory fasting or pledged fasting, the intention should be formed during the night, before the break of dawn even by seconds. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘A person who has not intended to fast before dawn renders his fast invalid.’²⁹⁴ If during the day, having not eaten or drunk anything since dawn, a person forms the intention to fast that day, it will be acceptable only if that fasting is voluntary. [A’ishah reports: ‘The Prophet (peace be upon him) came in one day and asked: “Have you got anything (to eat)?” We said: “No.” He said: “Then, I am fasting.”’²⁹⁵ On the other hand, obligatory fasting cannot be started with an intention formed during the day. The intention in obligatory fasting must be formed during the night, before dawn. It is sufficient to form the intention on the start of Ramadan for the whole month providing he doesn’t miss a day in between.

²⁹⁴ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 2,454; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 733; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 2,331; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,700; al-Darimi, *hadith* 1,740; al-Daraqutni, *hadith* No. 2,214.

²⁹⁵ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,154.

Exemptions from fasting

1. **Illness and old age:** A person who is ill and hopes to recover good health may not fast during the days when he is ill. When he is back in health he must fast the same number of days he did not fast in Ramadan, during the following eleven months. Allah says: '[Fast] on a certain number of days. But whoever of you is ill, or on a journey, shall fast instead the same number of days later on' (2: 184). He also says: 'So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days. Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship' (2: 185). The type of illness that gives the exemption from fasting is one which makes fasting hard.

A person suffering a chronic illness with little or no hope of recovery, and one who is permanently unable to fast such as a frail, elderly person, need not fast and are not required to fast later. What they are required to do is to give compensation in the form of feeding a poor person for every day when they did not fast. In the early days of Islam, when fasting was made a duty, Muslims were given the choice of either to fast or to feed one poor person for the day. Thus, Allah made the feeding of a poor person equal to fasting. This remains the case when exemption is permanent. Imam al-Bukhari mentions in his anthology of authentic *hadiths*: 'Al-Hasan and Ibrahim mentioned

[...] that an elderly person who finds fasting too hard may feed a poor person. Anas did that for a year or two when he was too old: he fed a poor person in compensation for every day he could not fast.²⁹⁶ Regarding an elderly man or woman who finds fasting too hard, Ibn [Abbas said: ‘Each should feed one poor person in compensation for every day of fasting.’²⁹⁷

Thus, a person who is permanently unable to fast, either because of a chronic illness or being elderly, should compensate for non-fasting by feeding a poor person. Scholars used to estimate that by a measure equal to 1.125 kilogram of wheat, rice, dates or the staple diet of one’s town. However, it is better to say that feeding a poor person should be of what one usually feeds his family, as Allah says in regard to the compensation of a broken oath: ‘The breaking of an oath must be atoned for by the feeding of 10 needy persons with more or less the same food as you normally give to your own families, or by clothing them, or by the freeing of one slave. He who cannot afford any of these shall fast three days instead’ (5: 89). If an ill person fasts, his fasting is valid.

2. Travel: A person on a journey is given the concession that he does not need to fast in Ramadan, but he must compensate for it by fasting the same number of days he did not fast during his travel. Allah says: ‘[Fasting for] a

²⁹⁶ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, vol. 6, p. 25.

²⁹⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 4,505.

limited number of days. So whoever among you is ill or on a journey [during them] - then an equal number of days [are to be made up].’ (2: 184). He also says: ‘So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days.’ (2: 185). Someone asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about fasting during travel. He answered: ‘If you wish you may fast, and you may not fast if you wish.’²⁹⁸ The Prophet (peace be upon him) started his travel to Makkah fasting, but when he reached al-Kadid he broke his fast, and so did his Companions.²⁹⁹

Exemption from fasting is applicable to travel that covers a distance similar to that which allows shortening prayers.³⁰⁰ This is estimated at about 80 kilometres. Another way of gauging it is according to what Muslims there consider as travelling. Moreover, travel must be for a legitimate purpose. If it is undertaken in order to commit a sinful action, or to dodge fasting, the exemption does not apply.

If a traveller chooses to fast, his fasting is valid. Anas reports: ‘We used to travel with Allah’s messenger, and a fasting person did not press an advantage against one who did not fast, nor did the one who was not fasting claim that he was doing better.’³⁰¹ It is a condition for fasting during travel that fasting should not cause hardship. If the person

²⁹⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,943; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,121.

²⁹⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,944; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,113.

³⁰⁰ Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 3, p. 34.

³⁰¹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,947; Muslim, *hadith* No. 116.

concerned finds fasting too hard or harmful, then it becomes prohibited and sinful to fast during travel. During his travel, the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man who was being given covering shade because it was too hot, and people gathered around him. When he was informed that the person was fasting, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘It is not an act of righteousness to fast when travelling.’³⁰²

3. Menstruation: When a woman is in her menstrual period, or having postnatal bleeding, she must not fast. In fact, if she fasts, her fast is invalid. Abu Sa[ʿid al-Khudri mentions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) clearly stated that a woman in menstruation may neither pray nor fast. She is required to compensate by fasting later on. [A’ishah said: ‘It happened to us and we were ordered to fast later in compensation, but not to compensate for missed prayers.’

4. Pregnancy and breastfeeding. A woman who is pregnant or breastfeeding and fears for herself or her child as a result of fasting, may not fast. Anas reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Allah has reduced a traveller’s prayer by half and exempted him from fasting, and He has exempted pregnant and breastfeeding women from fasting.’³⁰³ Both pregnant and breastfeeding women must compensate for not fasting by fasting a similar

³⁰² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,946.

³⁰³ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 20,326; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 715; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 2,274; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,667.

number of days later on, or they can feed a poor person for each day they do not fast. Ibn [Abbas said: ‘If a breastfeeding or a pregnant woman fears for her child, she does not fast, but she feeds a poor person.’³⁰⁴

Fasting and its effect in life

1. It is a commitment to obeying Allah and, as such, it helps to refrain from sin.
2. It provides good training to tolerate hardship with a cheerful manner.
3. It reminds us of Allah’s favours, as He has given us good food and drink and allowed us sex with our spouses. When we refrain from these during the day, we better appreciate Allah’s blessings.
4. It serves as a reminder of the need of our poor brethren.
5. Man fulfils the meaning of servitude to Allah through fasting.
6. Fasting helps anyone who is addicted to something forbidden to overcome his addiction.

What invalidates fasting:

A fasting person invalidates his fast by any of the following actions:

³⁰⁴ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 2,318.

1. Eating or drinking deliberately: Allah says: ‘And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then resume the fast till nightfall’ (2: 187). Furthermore, anything that takes the place of eating and/or drinking shares the same ruling and invalidates fasting. For example, receiving intravenous fluids takes the place of food and drink, because it nourishes the body the same as food and drink.
2. Sexual intercourse: Whoever has sexual intercourse with his wife when fasting, their fast is invalidated. The person who thus invalidates his fast during Ramadan is required to repent for having committed this sinful action, seek Allah’s forgiveness, fast a day in compensation for this invalidated day and further expiate his wrong by freeing a slave from bondage. If this is unavailable or unaffordable, then the expiation takes the form of fasting two consecutive months. If the offender is unable to fast two months, then he feeds 60 poor people. Abu Hurayrah reports: ‘We were sitting with Allah’s messenger when a man came in and said: “O Messenger of Allah, I am ruined.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him: “What have you done to be ruined?” He said: “I had intercourse with my wife when I was fasting (in Ramadan).” The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him: “Can you afford to free a slave?” The man said he could not. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: “Can you, then, fast two consecutive months?” The man said: “No.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: “Can you feed 60 poor people?” The man again said: “No.” The Prophet

(peace be upon him) waited. Then as we were still with the Prophet (peace be upon him), he was brought a sack of dates. He asked: “Where is the man who asked me earlier?” The man identified himself. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Take this and give it away to charity.” The man said: “Shall I give it to anyone poorer than me, Messenger of Allah? By Allah, there is not in between the two sides of Madinah a household that is poorer than my own family.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) smiled widely, then said: “Feed your family with it.”³⁰⁵

Related to this, fasting is invalidated by deliberate ejaculation, as in the case of masturbation or foreplay leading to ejaculation. All this counts as deliberate arousal and this is contrary to fasting. In such a case, the person who does any of these must compensate by repenting and fasting a day after Ramadan. There is no other expiation required, because such expiation is binding only in the case of the man having sexual intercourse with his wife.

3. Deliberate vomiting: This means deliberately throwing up whatever is in one’s stomach of food or drink. If it happens unintentionally, the fast remains valid. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Whoever throws up unintentionally need not compensate for his fast, but the one who throws up deliberately must repeat his fast.’³⁰⁶
4. Cupping: This involves bringing blood out through the skin, rather than the veins. If a fasting person undergoes

³⁰⁵ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,936; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,111.

³⁰⁶ Related by [Abdullah ibn Ahmad in *Zawa'id al-Musnad*, *hadith* No. 10,463; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 2,380; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 720; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,676; al-Nassa'i in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 3,117.

cupping, he invalidates his fasting, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Both the cupping and the cupped persons break their fast.’³⁰⁷ The person administering the cupping also invalidates his fast if he sucks the blood with his mouth, but if the sucking is done by some tools, then his fast remains valid.

5. Menstruation and postnatal bleeding: When a woman begins her menses, or her postnatal period, her fast is invalidated. She must compensate by fasting later. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Is it not true that when she has the period, she neither prays nor fasts?’³⁰⁸
6. Intending to break the fast: Any fasting person who forms the intention of breaking or ending his fast before the time is due invalidates his fast, even though he might not eat or drink. Intention is one of two essentials for the validity of fasting. If it is broken, with the intention to end the fast, the fast is broken.

The Night of Decree and *i [tikaf* in Ramadan

I [tikaf means committing oneself to something; but in Islamic contexts, it refers to the staying in seclusion in a mosque, by a Muslim who knows what he is doing, for the worship of Allah.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 2,367; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,680; Ibn Khuzaymah, *hadith* No. 1,983.

³⁰⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, Book 30, *hadith* No. 58

³⁰⁹ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina [*, vol. 2, p. 404; Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 3, p. 183.

Status: This is a recommended action, i.e. Sunnah, and it draws a person closer to Allah, who says in the Qur'an: 'And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform Tawaf and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer]."' (2: 125). This verse makes clear that it was an approved practice in earlier faiths. Allah also says in the verse explaining rulings applicable to fasting: 'And do not have relations with them (your wives) as long as you are staying for worship in the mosques.' (2: 187). [A'ishah reports that 'the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to spend the last ten days of Ramadan in seclusion in the mosque, until he passed away.'³¹⁰

All Muslims agree that it is an aspect of Islam and that it is a Sunnah which becomes binding only if a man commits himself to it by making a pledge to do it. Thus the fact that *i [tikaf]* is a Sunnah is confirmed by the Qur'an, the *hadith* and the unanimity of scholars.

Islam recommends Muslims to practise this Sunnah and stay in the mosque in the last 10 nights of Ramadan when they should devote more of their time to worship. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) practice in these 10 nights was to devote all his time to worship, staying up every night, eager to be attending to his worship on the Night of Decree which falls in one of these 10 nights. The Night of Decree is a night of great significance, including:

³¹⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 2,020; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,172.



- It is the night when the Qur'an was bestowed. 'Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during the Night of Decree' (97: 1).
- On this night Allah determines everything that takes place in the year ahead: 'On that night is made distinct every precise matter. [Every] matter [proceeding] from Us. Indeed, We were to send [a messenger]' (44: 4–5). This is a sub-decree, because Allah had determined everything more than 50,000 years before creation. However, on this night Allah determines what happens to His creation during the following year: who will survive and who will die; the saved and the ruined; the happy and the miserable; the powerful and the humiliated. Whatever Allah wishes to happen during the following year is written down on this Night of Power.
- It is a blessed night, as Allah says: 'Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night.' (44: 3).
- Worship on this night is better rewarded than worship over one thousand months, as Allah says: 'The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months' (97: 3). This means that worship on the Night of Decree is better rewarded than worship for a thousand months without the Night of Decree, which is equal to 83 years and three months.
- The angel Gabriel and other angels descend with blessings, goodness and forgiveness on that night, as Allah has stated: 'On that night, the angels and the Spirit, by their Lord's leave, descend with all His decrees' (97: 4).
- The Night of Decree is a night of peace, as Allah says: 'That night is peace, till the break of dawn' (97: 5). It is a night that is free of evil and harm, when a great deal of

worship and good actions are dedicated to Allah's pleasure. Hence, it is all peace.

- Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever stands in prayer the Night of Decree sincerely dedicating such worship for Allah's pleasure shall be forgiven their past sins.'³¹¹

Values to be observed by fasting people

1. Every Muslim must avoid telling lies, backbiting and cursing at all times, but this is even more strongly required in Ramadan. Abu Hurayrah quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: 'If a person does not desist from saying falsehood, or acting on the basis of falsehood, or quarrels, Allah does not need him to abstain from food and drink.'³¹²
2. Desisting from lewdness and foul language, as well as from answering those who use such language. Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Allah says: Fasting is Mine and it is I who give reward for it. Fasting is protection. On a fasting day, do not engage in wickedness or quarrelsome behaviour. If someone abuses or fights him (i.e. a fasting person), let him say: "I am fasting." By Him who holds Muhammad's soul in His hand, the smell of the mouth of a fasting person is better in Allah's sight than the smell of musk. A fasting

³¹¹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 2,014; Muslim, *hadith* No. 760.

³¹² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 6,057.



person has two occasions to rejoice: when he breaks his fast he rejoices and when he meets his Lord, he will rejoice for having fasted.’³¹³

3. A Muslim must protect himself and his body against committing any sin at all times, but this is more emphasized in Ramadan. Allah says: ‘Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Man’s ears, eyes and heart shall all be called to account’ (17: 36).

³¹³ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,904; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,151.