

Date: 15.03.2024

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

FASTING: HEALTH FOR THE BODY, PEACE FOR THE HEART

Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, our Lord Almighty (swt) states, "**O believers! Fasting is prescribed for you—as it was for those before you— so perhaps you will become mindful of Allah.**"¹

In the hadith I have read, our Prophet (saw) says, "**Whoever observes fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah's rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven.**"²

Dear Believers!

Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam. Fasting is abstaining from food, drink, lustful desires, and all evil acts from the time of imsak until iftar, all done for the sake of Allah. Fasting during Ramadan is fardh for all Muslims who are mentally sound, have reached puberty, and do not have a valid religious excuse like illness or being on a journey.

Dear Muslims!

Fasting is more than just abstaining from food and drink. The true essence of fasting is reached when it encompasses our mind, soul, and entire being. Fasting can then bring health to our bodies and peace to our hearts.

The fasting of the mind means contemplating the might and mercy of our Lord (swt). It also involves staying away from evil thoughts that diminish humanity. It is to be free from the chains of worldly desires, ambitions, and concerns. The fasting of the heart means placing no love for anything above the love for Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). It also involves letting go of all evil thoughts and feelings that darken the heart such as hatred, and jealousy.

Dear Believers!

The fasting of the tongue means abstaining from lying, gossiping, slander, and using harsh or offensive language. It also involves refraining from insults that disrespect someone's character, reputation, or worth. The fasting of the ear means avoiding

listening to bad and evil words. It also involves not accepting something we hear as true without doing our research. The Messenger of Allah (saw) warns us in this regard as follows, "**Whoever does not give up evil and ignorant speech, and acting in accordance with that, Allah has no need of his giving up his food and drink.**"³

Dear Muslims!

The fasting of the hand means refraining from reaching out to anything haram. It also involves keeping our hands away from anything not halal or undeserved. It entails giving full measure when we measure, and weigh with an even balance. It is to use our hands for acts of compassion, solidarity, and sharing, not for violence. The fasting of the foot means following the straight path laid out by Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). It also involves using our steps to pursue good works and acts of charity.

Honorable Muslims!

Fasting means sharing our iftar and sahur meals with those in need, the destitute, and the orphan. It means remembering those confined to hunger and thirst around the world. It means truly feeling the pain of our Muslim brothers and sisters, especially those in Gaza and East Turkestan, who are groaning under persecution. It means continuing to support and advocate for the oppressed through our actions, words, and resources. It means refusing to financially support, even in the smallest way, those who oppress others or those who enable them.

Dear Believers!

Next Monday marks the 109th anniversary of the Çanakkale Victory. Çanakkale is the place where our courageous ancestors secured our independence and survival in a valiant struggle against foreign powers. In Çanakkale, our heroic nation defied overwhelming odds and halted the daring attacks. What falls upon us today is to deeply understand the spirit of Çanakkale and ensure it is passed on to future generations. It is to honor the sacrifice of our martyrs by living by and keeping alive the sublime values they entrusted to us at the cost of their lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to commemorate with deepest respect and gratitude our martyrs who sacrificed their lives for our homeland and sacred values throughout history, and our brave veterans who fought valiantly for this cause. May our Almighty Lord (swt) grant everlasting strength to our state, which is a beacon of right, truth, and true path, and lasting happiness to our nation, who are the hope for the marginalized, the innocent, and the oppressed.

¹ Baqarah 2/183.

² Bukhari, Sawm, 6.

³ Bukhari, Sawm, 8.