Holy Ramadhan

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Welcome Holy Ramadhan

The Holy Month of Ramadhan, which begins after the crescent of the new moon is spotted, is one of the most sacred Islamic observances because it marks the month in which Allah revealed the Holy Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), bringing with it all the glory. This is the month in which the door of heavens are kept open, doors of hell are closed and Satan is kept in chains.

Ramadhan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse between dawn and dusk is simply the means to attain the spiritual experience, but it is certainly not the ends. Each Ramadhan brings new insights and meanings for the faithful. The main purpose of fasting is described in the Qur'an as "so that you may attain taqwa or God-consciousness". Fasting is thus yet another instrument for bringing us closer to our natural state, our state of fitrah and for cleansing this state from the dross of any disobedience and corruption.

Ramadhan is a month of heightened devotion. In it, Salaat is performed with greater intensity. It is a period of intense reflection and devotion, seeking guidance and forgiveness, and reading the Qur'an. Ramadhan is a great opportunity to get closer to the blessed guidance of the Qur'an which was revealed in this month. Ramadhan is also called the month of the Qur'an. The month of Ramadhan is an opportunity to develop qualities of endurance and self-restraint, to control anger and a fiery or malicious tongue. Ramadhan is a time to awaken compassion and solidarity with others and in particular with the poor. We are urged to be more liberal in giving during Ramadhan and are required at the end of fasting to give Zakat al Fitr, an amount to enable all to share in the spirit of warmth, affection and brotherhood.

Ramadhan is above all an opportunity to reorient oneself to the Creator and the natural path of goodness and God-consciousness. Fasting has long been revered as a path to holiness among many of the world's religions. But the practice is not as widespread as it once was, except among Muslims, who regard fasting (siyam) as a pillar of faith. For Muslims, Ramadhan isn't considered a hardship, but a time of charity and fellowship, so revered that even those most lax in their faith are observant. Jews and Christians share similar beliefs. For instance, the Jewish fast day of Yom Kippur is a time of solemnity as well as joy. Fasting is considered part of the process of atonement.

The heyday for fasting among Christians was the Middle Ages. In its extreme form, saints such as Catherine of Siena and Clare of Assisi fasted to near starvation and often flogged themselves to gain control over carnal desires and induce mystical visions. Fasting is not obligated for the reason of instigating hunger so that other desires are suppressed. Rather, fasting should make the believer closer to Allah (swt) and hence it becomes easier for him to abstain from committing the Haram.

Here, we must note, any divine rule is associated with some effort or hardship. And some obligations require more hardship than others. For example, Jihad requires more effort and energy than fasting. But the hardship itself is not a reason for the legislation of the obligation. However, Allah (swt) will reward man according how much effort and energy he puts into the fulfilling of the divine rule.

As for the fasting, it requires patience and endurance. Allah (swt) declared: "O you who believe! be patient and excel in patience and remain steadfast, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, that you may be successful." (Qur'an 3:200) The evening of the 23rd day of the month marks the most special day of the year for believers as Laylat-al-Qadr (the Night of Decree) is observed. It is believed that on this night Prophet Muhammad first received the revelation of the Holy Quran. Any prayer or deed is returned manifold and all sins are forgiven.

The Month of Ramadhan

To describe the objective and subjective merits of the month of Ramadhan, which justify its higher rank over other months, it is more suitable to refer to the words of the Almighty Allah, and His Last Prophet. The Holy Qur'an says: O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil). For a certain number of days; but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; and those who are not able to do it may effect a redemption by feeding a poor man; so whoever does good spontaneously it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know.

The month of Ramazan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction; therefore whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or upon a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for His having guided you and that you may give thanks. (AL BAQARAH: 183 to 185) It is made lawful to you to go into your wives on the night of the fast; they are an apparel for you

and you are an apparel for them; Allah knew that you acted unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you (mercifully) and removed from you (this burden); so now be in contact with them and seek what Allah has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn, then complete the fast till night, and have not contact with them while you keep to the mosques; these are the limits of Allah, so do not go near them. Thus does Allah make clear His communications for men that they may guard (against evil). (AL BAQARAH: 187)

And men who fast and women who fastAllah has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward. (AL AH'ZAAB: 35) The Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S.A.) in the month of Ramaz'aan. Fasting throughout the month has been made obligatory. Fasting is one of the "Waajib" (obligatory) rules of conduct laid down by Islam. Shayk Suddooq (R.A.) quotes Imam Ali bin Moosa Ar Riza (A.S.) that he received from his Holy ancestors, on the authority of Imam Ali ibna Abi Taalib (A.S.), the text of the speech the Holy Prophet used to deliver at the advent of the blessed month of Ramdhan:

The Holy Prophet (S.A.) said:

"O men and women! Draws near unto you the blessed month, overflowing with advantages, merciful, ready to put up your sins of omission and commission to Allah for obtaining His forgiveness. Its days, nights and hours, in the estimation of Allah, are more select, refined and important than the days, nights and hours of other months. It surpasses all months in merits and favors". In this month you are the guests of Allah, enjoying His hospitality, you are from among His favorites, your breathing is "praise of Allah", your sleep is His worship, your prayers receive His approval, your invocations are sanctioned. So, sincerely, free from evil and sinful thoughts and actions, with clear conscience, pray and request that He may give your heart and confidence to observe fast and recite the Holy Qur'an and dua'as throughout this month. He who does not receive mercy and forgiveness in this month is really an ill-fated unfortunate, condemned to everlasting unhappiness and deprivation. Thirst and hunger you undergo, feel and live through, her and now, bring to your memory the severity and sharpness of the drought and starvation that will be the order of the day on the Day of Judgment. Give alms to the poor and the destitute. Treat your parents and elders with respect. Be kind and loving to your children and juniors. Take care of and look after your kith and kin. Keep from giving tongue to that which should not even be whispered. Shut your eyes to that which is indecent to have an eye for. Turn a deaf ear to that which is too slanderous to be all ears. Be compassionate, gentle and benign unto orphans so that after you, your children, if need be, receive the same

treatment from others. Turn repentant to Allah and seek His nearness. After every prayer recite dua's to invoke His mercy and forgiveness because the most suitable time to get fulfillment of desires is when you have prayed a salat, the Almighty gives answer to His servants who call Him in these moments. O People! In truth and fact your bodies and souls are held in pledge, strike a bargain to set them free by asking forgiveness of Allah. Your backs are burdened with a hard to endure load of sins, prostrate yourselves in adoration of Allah, a great deal, to make the drag less heavy, because the Lord of the Worlds has given His word, in the Name of His Might and Honor, not to take to task those who pray and prostrate in this month, the flames of the fire will not frighten them.

O People! Whoso provides a meal to a faithful, at the time of breaking the fast, earns the recompense of setting an enslaved human being free. O People! In this month, whoso makes better his or her morals will cross the "Bridge of Siraat" with ease and finesse, where people, at every step, would stumble and fall; whoso gives leisure and respite to his or her employees will receive equivalent leniency on the Day of Reckoning; whoso takes care of and looks after the orphans and relatives will be treated mercifully on the Day of Judgment; whoso prays optional salats will get the immunity from Hellfire, and praying of obligatory salats, in prime time, multiply the good in leaps and bounds; whoso recites even one verse of the Holy Qur'an, obtains the reward of a full recital of the whole Book in the other months.

O People! In this month, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the doors of the everlasting bliss and happiness are thrown open, so beseech Allah not ever to shut them off to our face; and the traps of the eternal curse are unhinged, so make a request to Allah to remove them from your path for ever; the devils are held in chains, so pray to Allah not to set them free for leading your astray. The month of Ramadhan is very dear to Allah. It is the most august of all months, pure, generous and merciful. Do not let its nights go waste in slumber, its days in careless omission or loss of remembrance of Allah.

Rules of fasting

Islam has made fasting obligatory for all men and women who have attained the age of Bulugh. To kill our low instincts and to help us acknowledge that we have a will power which enables us to abstain from certain things which if done will invalidate the fast. As a result it helps us to strengthen our will power against those things which are Haraam and cause us to commit sin if we do them. Brings about Unity amongst you and those living near you, in that while you are fasting you are aware that there are others close by who are also fasting and in the same way when you have Iftar there are others doing the same. It creates a feeling of

brotherhood. As you feel hungry you begin to realise how the people who are poor and cannot afford food suffer daily in their lives and as a result of your fasting you may feel that you should do something for them. However, sadly we tend to forget all about our hunger at the time of Iftar when we eat a lot to make up for fasting; for this we have been advised by our .Holy Prophet (S) to eat only enough to kill the hunger and not more

WAJIB FASTS

Fast during the month of Ramadhan. Qaza fast for the month of Ramadhan. Fast becoming wajib on account of Kaffara. Qaza fasts of a dead person becoming wajib on the eldest son. .Fasts becoming Qaza due to Nazar, Qasam or Ahad. Fast is broken or left out intentionally

SUNNAT FASTS

On all days of Rajab and Shaban or on as many as is possible to fast, even if it is only one day. On 13th, 14th and 15th of every Lunar month. The day of Nawroz (21 March) From the 4th up to the 9th of Shawwal. The 25th and the 29th day of Zilqad. The first and last Thursday of every month AND the first Wednesday after the 10th of every month. From the 1st day to the 9th day of the month of Zilhajj. The 18th of Zilhajj - Eid-e-Ghadeer. The 24th of Zilhajj - Eid-e-Mubahela. The 1st, 3rd and 7th day of Muharram. The 17th of Rabiul Awwal - Birthday of our Holy Prophet (S). The 15th of Jamadiul Awwal. The 27th of Rajab - the appointment of the Holy Prophet (S) to the prophetic mission (Bi'that).

Fasting is Mustahab on all the days of the year except on those days on which it is Haraam to .observe fast. Some are mentioned below

HARAAM FASTS

Eid-ul-Fitr. Eid-ul-Hajj. A fast kept despite illness. MAKRUH FAST It is Makruh to fast on the 10th of Muharram (Ashura Day). Conditions of Fasting Sanity. Islam: Should be a Muslim and follow Islamic laws. For women - they must remain free from Haiz and Nifas for the whole day. Not being in danger of illness by fasting. Not being a traveler. Saum is an act of worship; its main purpose is to abstain from forbidden things so as to earn "the pleasure of Allah by obeying Him." The most important thing is the Niyyat (Intention). There is no need to utter it. However one must have in mind why one is fasting; that is one must have in mind: "Qurbatan Ilallah"; for the pleasure of Allah.

Niyyat can be made for the whole month together on the eve of the first of Ramadhan or individually on the eve of each day. If you choose to do Niyyat for the whole month together, then if you miss a fast for any reason in between, you will be required to do Niyyat again. Fasting begins with the setting in of the time for Subh prayers. This time is called SUBHE .SADIQ or FAJR. Fasting ends at MAGHRIB which occurs a few minutes after sunset

Things Which Invalidate The Fast

Eating and drinking. Ascribing false things to Allah, Prophet (S) or with the successors of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Making dust reach one's throat. Immersing one's head completely in water. *Not fulfilling Ghusls that are Wajib upon you before Azan of Fajr prayers. Vomiting. Sexual relations. Doing any such thing by which semen comes out. * To intentionally remain in a state of impurity caused by Janabat, Haidh or Nifas up to Subhe Sadiq of a month of .Ramadhan fast or its Qaza

THINGS TO AVOID WHEN FASTING

Eyedrops or Surma, etc whose taste or smell can be felt in the throat. Actions which would make you physically weak. Keeping a wet cloth on the body for the sake of cooling. Snuff and fragrance from sweet plants and flowers. Tooth extraction or any other action which will cause you to bleed. A wet tooth brush for brushing. Putting water or using any kind of mouthwash unnecessarily. The above 7 things do not break your fast if you do them but it is better if you do not do them. People Exempted From Fasting They are of 2 categories:

Those who will not fast and have no Qaza to give; Those will give Qaza later, when the holy month of Ramadhan is over. Men and women who are not capable of fasting because of advanced old age are totally exempted. They do not have to give Qaza later. Those elderly people who find it very difficult to fast are also exempted; but they have to pay a redemption (Fidyah) of ONE MUDD (i.e. 3/4 kg) of food in lieu of each fast, to the poor and needy. It is recommended that preference be given to wheat or barley. A person who, due to certain illness, is unable to sustain and endure thirst, is exempted. However, in view of the sanctity of the holy month, he or she should not drink water to quench the thirst fully. Such a person will pay Fidyah in place of each fast, and will give Qaza if the illness is later remedied. A mother in the advanced stage of pregnancy will not fast if fasting is harmful to herself or the baby. She will give Fidyah in place of the fasts and will give Qaza later. A mother who is nursing her child is exempted if she fears that fasting might reduce the supply of milk for the child. She will give

Fidyah in place of each fast she has missed out and will give Qaza later. A lady in her period will not fast. In fact, she is forbidden to fast while in her periods. She will give Qaza later.

Kaffara

It is a great sin to eat or drink during the days of Holy Ramadhan, or deliberately commit acts which break the fast without a justifiable reason. Anyone who leaves out a fast purposely has to give Qaza as well as Kaffara. The Kaffara for each fast is: either: to free a slave. or: to fast for 60 days. or: to feed 60 poor. If you choose to fast for 2 months as Kaffara, you will have to fast for 31 days together and thereafter, you can complete the balance of 29 days in your own time. However, you will not begin fasting your 31 days when you know there will be a day in between when it is Haraam to fast; e.g. You will not begin fasting your Kaffara at the beginning of Zilhajj as on the 10th of Zilhajj - Eid-ul-Hajj - it is Haraam to fast. A list of days when it is Haraam to fast is given in the notes.

If however, you choose to feed 60 poor, you have to give away food or grain which would be enough for a full meal. This can be in the form of wheat, barley or loaves. If a person breaks his fast by a Haraam acts like: drinking alcohol, etc; OR Attributing lies to Allah, His Prophet (S) and Masoomeen (A); he or she will have to give ALL 3 Kaffara together.

Rules Regarding Qaza Fasts

When ghusl becomes Wajib and a person fails to do it before Adhan for Fajr prayers after having woken up once only, then just Qaza is required. If however, a person wakes up for a second time during the night and still does not perform ghusl then not only is Qaza required but Kaffara has to be given as well. If a person does something that breaks the fast when he is not sure of the timing and later finds that the time for Fajr had set in, or if he breaks his fast thinking it is already time to do so and finds out later that it wasn't, Qaza has to be kept for that fast. If a person puts water in the mouth to feel cool or without any reason and the water is then swallowed by mistake, Qaza fast has to be kept. If a person breaks the fast due to unavoidable reasons then Qaza fast has to be kept.

If a person who was insane becomes sane, he is not required to fast those which he missed when he was insane. When an unbeliever becomes a Muslim, he does not have to fast those that he missed out when he was an unbeliever. However, if a Muslim changes his Faith to accept another and then later becomes a Muslim again, he has to give Qaza for all those he missed out when he wasn't a Muslim. If a person breaks his fast on account of compulsion, e.g

if he has to break his fast because there may be a danger to his life from other unbelievers around him, then he has to fast Qaza for the fasts missed. If a person leaves out a fast for any reason that is valid, e.g. becoming ill during the month of Ramadhan, then he has to fast Qaza for those fasts after that Ramadhan but before the next Ramadhan. If however, he does not manage to complete the Qaza fasts before the next year, then he has to give one MUDD (3/4 kg) of foodstuff, (i.e. wheat, barley, etc), to a poor person for each fast missed out. After that those Qaza fasts can be kept at any time throughout the person's life. If a person does not fast during Ramadhan due to illness or any other valid reason, and dies before the end of Ramadhan, it is not necessary to give Qaza fasts on their behalf. A person who is fasting a Qaza fast for the month of Ramadhan can break his fast before Zohr. If a person is fasting Qaza for someone who is dead, it is better not to break the fast after Zohr. After the death of a person, his eldest son should keep his Qaza fasts. If a father has not kept a Wajib fast other than that of the month of Ramadhan, e.g. a fast that became Wajib on account of a vow, the eldest son should keep Qaza for that fast. However, if the father was hired to fast Qaza for another person and he did not observe them, it is not Wajib for the eldest son to offer them. If the illness of a person continues for a few years, he should, after being cured, observe the Qaza fasts for the past year and give one MUDD of foodstuffs to a poor person, per fast for the previous years.

Rules to follow when travelling during the Holy Month of Ramadhan

Travelling means having reached outside the boundaries of the city, town or village, on your way to a journey which should not be of less than 28 miles. On a day one has the intention of travelling, one will not break the fast while still at home or in the city. The fast will be broken once you cross the boundary of your hometown. At any place where you pray Qasr, you will not fast. If you have travelled to a place where your stay will be less than 10 days, you will pray Qasr for the prayers of 4 rakaats, and you will not fast.

You will give Qaza later. The people whose job is that of travelling, e.g. pilot, crew, drivers, etc or one who undertakes a journey for a sinful purpose, must fast even while they are travelling, and their prayer will not be Qasr, either. To travel for the sole purpose of not fasting is allowed, but it is better if you do not do that. If you travel from the place where you live AFTER the time of ZOHR, you will complete the fast. However, if you travel BEFORE the time of ZOHR, you will not fast. The day you arrive back from your trip, if you reach the boundary of your hometown BEFORE the time of ZOHR, and you have not done anything that will break your fast, then you must fast on that day. However, if you reach the boundary of your hometown AFTER the time

of ZOHR you will not fast and give Qaza after Ramadhan. If a person makes a vow for a Sunnat fast on a particular day and he finds that he has to travel on that day, then, because he had specified the day he was going to keep the Sunnat fast, he can fast while journeying; the same applies to a person who makes a vow to keep a Sunnat fast on a particular day regardless of whether he is going to travel on that day or not.

However, if a person makes a vow to fast but does not specify the day then he cannot fast if he is going to travel. A traveller can observe a Sunnat fast in Medina on three days if his main purpose is for praying for the fulfilment of his needs, and it is better that those three days are Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. If a person does not know that a traveller cannot fast and finds out during the fast, his fast becomes void; however, if he does not find out about it until .sunset, his fast is valid

Daily Prayers

1st day O Allah, on this day make my fasts the fasts of those who fast (sincerely), and my standing up in prayer of those who stand up in prayer (obediently), awaken me in it from the sleep of the heedless, and forgive me my sins, O God of the worlds. and forgive me, O one who forgives the sinners. 2nd day O Allah, on this day, take me closer towards Your pleasure, keep me away from Your anger and punishment, grant me the opportunity to recite Your verses (of the Qur'an), by Your mercy, O the most Merciful. 3rd day O Allah, on this day, Grant me wisdom and awareness, keep me away from foolishness and pretension, grant me a share in every blessing You send down, by Your generosity, O the most Generous.

4th day O Allah, on this day, strengthen me in carrying out Your commands, let me taste the sweetness of Your remembrance, grant me, through Your graciousness, that I give thanks to You. Protect me, with Your protection and cover, O the most discerning of those who see. 5th day O Allah, on this day, place me among those who seek forgiveness. Place me among Your righteous and obedient servants, and place me among Your close friends, by Your kindness, O the most Merciful. 6th day O Allah, on this day, do not let me abase myself by incurring Your disobedience, and do not strike me with the whip of Your punishment, keep me away from the causes of Your anger, by Your kindness and Your power, O the ultimate wish of those who desire.

7th day O Allah, on this day, help me with its fasts and prayers, and keep me away from mistakes and sins of the day, grant me that 1 remember You continuously through the day, by Your assistance, O the Guide of those who stray. 8th day O Allah, on this day, let me have mercy on the orphans, and feed [the hungry], and spread peace, and keep company with the

noble-minded, O the shelter of the hopeful. 9th day O Allah on this day, grant me a share from Your mercy which is wide, guide me towards Your shining proofs, lead me to Your all-encompassing pleasure, by Your love, O the hope of the desirous. 1Oth day O Allah, on this day, make me among those who rely on You, from those who You consider successful. and place me among those who are near to you, by Your favour, O goal of the seekers. 11th day O Allah, on this day, make me love goodness, and dislike corruption and disobedience, bar me from anger and the fire [of Hell], by Your help, O the helper of those who seek help. 12th day O Allah, on this day, beautify me with covering and chastity, cover me with the clothes of contentrnent and sufficiency let me adhere to justice and fairness, and keep me safe from all that I fear, by Your protection, O the protector of the frightened. 13th day O Allah, on this day, purify me from uncleanliness and dirt, make me patient over events that are decreed, grant me the ability to be pious, and keep company with the good, by Your help, O the beloved of the destitute. 14th day O Allah, on this day, do not condemn me for slips, make me decrease mistakes and errors, do not make me a target for afflictions and troubles, by Your honour, O the honour of the Muslims.

15th day O Allah on this day, grant me the obedience of the humble expand my chest through the repentance of the humble, by Your security, O the shelter of the fearful. 16th day O Allah, on this day, grant me comparability with the good, keep me away from patching up with the evil, lead me in it, by Your mercy, to the permanent abode, by Your Godship, O the God of the worlds. 17th day O Allah, on this day, guide me towards righteous actions, fulfil my needs and hopes, O One who does not need explanations nor questions, O One who knows what is in the chests of the (people of the) world. Bless Muhammad and his family, the Pure. 18th day O Allah, on this day, awaken me for the blessings of its early mornings, Illuminate my heart with the brightness of its rays, let every part of my body follow its effects, by Your light, O the illuminator of the hearts of those who know. 19th day O Allah, on this day, multiply for me its blessings, and ease my path towards its bounties, do not deprive me of the acceptance of its good deeds, O the Guide towards the clear truth.

2Oth day O Allah, on this day, open for me the doors of the heavens, and lock the doors of Hell from me, help me to recite the Qur'an, O the One who sends down tranquility into the hearts of believers. 21st day O Allah, on this day, show me the way to win Your pleasure, do not let Shaytan have a means over me, make Paradise an abode and a resting place for me, O the One who fulfills the requests of the needy. 22nd day O Allah, on this day, open for me the doors of Your Grace, send down on me its blessings, help me towards the causes of Your mercy, and give me a place in the comforts of Paradise, O the one who answers the call of the distressed.

23rd day O Allah, on this day, wash away my sins, purify me from all flaws, examine my heart with (for) the piety of the hearts, O One who overlooks the shortcomings of the sinners. 24th day O Allah, on this day, I ask You for what pleases You, and I seek refuge in You from what displeases You, I ask You to grant me the opportunity to obey You and not disobey You, O One who is generous with those who ask. 25th day O Allah, on this day, make me among those who love Your friends, and hate Your enemies, following the way of Your last Prophet, O the Guardian of the hearts of the Prophets.

26th day O Allah, on this day. make my efforts worthy of appreciation, and my sins forgiven, my deeds accepted, my flaws concealed, O the best of those who hear. 27th day O Allah, on this day, bestow on me the blessings of Laylatul Qadr, change my affairs from (being) difficult to (being) easy, accept my apologies, and decrease for me [my] sins and burdens, O the Compassionate with His righteous servants. 28th day O Allah, on this day, grant me a share in its nawafil (recommended prayers), honor me by attending to my problems, make closer the means to approach You, from all the means, O One who is not preoccupied by the requests of the beseechers. 29th day O Allah, on this day, cover me with Your mercy, grant me in it success and protection, purify my heart from the darknes, of false accusations, O the Merciful to His believing servants. 3Oth day O Allah, on this day, make my fast worthy of appreciation and acceptance, according to what pleases You, and pleases the Messenger, the branches being strengthened by the roots, for the sake of our leader, Muhammad, and his purified family. .Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds

Moon Sighting

The New Moon – A Definition

The New Moon phase is defined to be the moment when the moon is almost directly between the Earth and the Sun. At this moment the moon's dark surface faces the Earth. The New Moon is therefore completely invisible. The date and time of this invisible New Moon is commonly found in almanacs, newspapers and calendars. The Islamic month begins with the visible First Crescent and not with the invisible New Moon. The first Crescent is usually sighted in the western sky just after sunset on the first or second evening after the New Moon phase. The sighting depends on the age of the crescent, the time difference between sunset and moonset and the angular distance between the sun and the moon. We should not confuse the New Moon with the visible thin crescent. We should realise that a crescent following a lunar month of 30 days will look larger and stay longer than the crescent following a month of 29 days.

The first date of the month is proved in the following way:
If a person sights the moon himself. If a person confirms he has sighted the moon, and his words assure or satisfy another person as well as everything else assuring or satisfying him. If two just (Adil) persons say that they have sighted the moon, the first date of the month will not be proved if they differ about the particulars (i.e. particular details as to how it was sighted). If 30 days pass from the 1st of the moon of Shaaban whereby the 1st of Ramadhan is proved and if 30 days pass from the 1st of Ramadhan whereby the 1st of Shawaal is proved. If the moon is high up in the sky or sets late, it is not proof of the fact that it appeared the previous night. However, if the moon is seen before noon, that day will be treated as the 1st of the month (i.e. it will be assumed that the new moon appeared the previous night). Similarly if there is a halo (crown of light) around it, it goes to show that the new moon appeared the previous night. On the Night of Power pray to God with all your heart and He will definitely answer all your prayers. The Qur'an says : "Surely We revealed it (the Holy Qur'an) on the grand night. And what will make you comprehend what the grand night. The grand night is better than a thousand months. The angels and Gibreel descend in it by the permission of their Lord for every affair, Peace! It is till the break of the morning." (97:1-5)
The night is full of blessings because the Eminent Qur'an descended in it. The Qur'an is peace by itself. It distinguishes between the good and evil and shows the path of eternal Peace and Bliss to all Mankind forever. This being so, the Night in which this Divine Book was sent down is worthy of great esteem. During this night, as explained in the verse quoted above, the Angels and the Heavenly spirit (Hazrat Gibreel Alai-his-Salam) descend. Their nearness to earth gives a spiritual luster to the hearts and souls of the believers. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the 12 Imams (A.S.) passed this night in prayer and worship of God. Those who pass his night in Prayer, experience an unimaginable bliss, a deep feeling of great pleasure as a result of immense heavenly blessings in this night.
Recite the Holy Qur'an, seek Allah's forgiveness and pray for the good of this world as well as the hereafter.

The Night of Qadr

Shab-e-Qadr is the night, which is the best night among the nights of the whole year. The "A'maal" (religious performances) of this night are better than the A'maal of 1000 nights. In this night the divine Annual Decree is passed. The Angels and Roohul Ameen (A highly dignified Angel) descend on this earth, in that night. These call on the Imam of the time, and what is ordained (by Allah) for everybody is presented before the Imam. The A'maal of Shab-e-

Qadr are of two kinds. Some are common to all three nights others are particular for one of those three nights. The common A'maals are: - 01. To take a bath. Allama Majlisi says, "It is better to take a bath before sunset so that the night prayers may be performed after bath". 02. To offer two Raqats of Namaz, in every Raqat offer Surat-al-Hamd, and Surat-al-Tauhid/ Sure Ikhlaas (Kulhowallah) seven times, and after finishing the prayer 70 times recite: "Astagferullaah Rabbi Wa atoobo elaihe" i.e., "I seek pardon from God and ask for penitence from Him".

03. The Holy Qur'an should be opened and placed in front, then one should recite, "Alaahumma inni asaloka be kitaabekal munzale Wa maa feeh, wa feehismokal akbaro wa asmaakal husnaa, wa maa yokhaafo Wa yurjaa an taj-alani min otaqaaeka minan-Naar", i.e., "O Allah treat me as one of those who are free from Hell, in the name of this Holy Book sent by Thee, whatever there be in the Book. Including Ism-e-A'azam and Asmaa-e-Husnaa and the things to be dreaded, the things that may be expected and desired, like blessings of Jannat. Do forgive through the grace of this book". (SALAWAT-After this he may beg from Allah whatever he wants).

04. He should place the Holy Qur'an on his head and say, "Allaahumma be haqqe haazal Qur'an we be haqqe man arsaltahoo beh, Wa be haqqe kulle momenin madahtahoo feeh, we be haqqeka alaihim fa-laa ahada a'arafo be haqqeka mink", i.e., "O Allah! I appeal to Thee in the name of this Qur'an and the Rooh that was sent along with it, and in the name of the Momin (believer) whose praise is contained in this Book and Tine obligation that is on them. No one else recognizes the right and truth more than Thee". (SALAWAT-After this he should repeat 10 times each): - BEKA YA ALLAH'HO (S.W.T.) BE MOHAMMADIN (S.A.W.) BE ALIYYIN (A.S.) BE FATEMATA (A.S.) BIL HASANE (A.S.) BIL HUSAINE (A.S.) BE ALIY IBNIL HUSAIN (A.S.) BE MOHAMMED IBN ALIYYIN (A.S.) BE JA'FAR IBN MOHAMMEDIN (A.S.) BE MOOSA IBN JA'FAR (A.S.) BE ALI IBN MOOSA (A.S.) BE MOHAMMED IBN ALIYYIN (A.S.) BE ALI IBN MOHAMMED (A.S.) BIL HASAN IBN ALIYYIN (A.S.) BIL HOJJATIL QAEM (A.S.) Then he should invoke to Allah whatever he likes.

05. To recite the Ziarat of Imam Hussain (A.S.). According to Hadis, during Shab-e-Qadr an angel proclaims from the Arsh (Throne) on the Seventh sky, "Allah the Benevolent forgives him, whosoever performs the Ziarat of the grave of Imam-e-Hussain (A.S.)." 06. One should keep himself awake throughout these three nights. The vigil during these nights carries great Sawab (heavenly reward). 07. To offer 100 Raq'ats of Namaz. It has been highly recommended. It is better to recite (after Surat-al-Hamd) 10 times the Surat-al-Tauhid/ Sure Ikhlaas (Kulhowallah). 08. Recite: "Astagferullaah Rabbi Wa atoobo elaihe" 100 times (i.e., "I seek

pardon from God and ask for penitence from Him"). 09. Recite: "Allaahummal'an qatalatal Ameeril Momeneen" 100 times (i.e., "O Allah! Thy malison upon the assassin of Ameerul Moineneen Ali ibne Abi Talib").

Du'a for the 19th night: - O One Who was before everything and then brought everything into existence. He will remain while all else will be destroyed. O the One sole and solitary excepting Whom there is none else in the high heavens or low earths or above and below them, or in between them who is worth worshipping. Only Thou art the deity and none else deserves to be worshipped. Thou only deserves the praise which cannot be encompassed but by Thee. Therefore bestow Peace and Blessings on Muhammad (S.A.W.) and Aal-e-Muhammad (A.S.) such as no body else has the power to encompass.

10. Recite the following Suras from the Holy Qur'an: ANKABUT (the Spider) 29th Sura. RUM (The Roman Empire) 30th Sura. DUKHAN (Smoke or Mist) 44th Sura.

11. This du'a is to be recited: - I have passed the evening as a very humble servant of Thee. I have no control over the gains and losses for my person. I cannot remove any evil from myself. I depose against my conscience. I admit my weakness and inability of managing my affairs. Bestow Tine blessings on Mohammad (S.A.W.) and his Aal (A.S.). Whatever Thou hast given me or promised, fulfill that. Verily! I am Tine humble, weak and destitute servant. O Allah! Let me not forget the blessings that Thou hast bestowed on me, and let me not be forgetful about Tine kindness. Do not deny me Tine acceptance though it may be delayed, may it pertain to sorrow or happiness, and may it be connected with peace and tranquility or hardship and vicissitudes or pertaining to blessings. Thou hearse and accepts invocations in every condition. The Prophet (S.A.W.) when asked what should one invoke Allah during these nights, said: "Ask for your safety (here and in the hereafter)". DU'A: - O Allah! Whatever is decided and ordained by Thee during Lailatul Qadr (night of Destiny) is final and full of wisdom. Whatever changes are affected, in the Night in previous decrees that could not be changed by anybody else. Do let me be one of those whose Hajj is acceptable, whose efforts are rewarded, the efforts of those respected Hajis whose sins have been pardoned and whose errors have been forgiven. Add to my destiny the length of my life, increase my life, increase my livelihood and fulfill my desires. Note: Beg from Allah after this whatever you desire.

Du'a for the 21st night: - O One Who turns day into night and night into day. O One Who brings out living from dead and dead from living. O One Who gives sustenance to whomsoever and whatsoever he likes. O Allah! O Merciful! O Allah! O Allah! O Allah! The best names are for Thee alone. The best examples are for Thee. The grandeur and choice things are for Thee. I beg of Thee to bless Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his Aal (A.S.). Write down my name, in this

night with the fortunate ones. Let my soul be in the company of the martyrs. Let my good acts be reckoned as "Illyeen" (exalted). Let my sins be condoned. Bestow on me that belief by virtue of which Thou may be nearest to my heart, that "Eemaan" which may remove all doubts from my mind. Let me be satisfied with that whatever Thou hast ordained for me. Let me have the virtues of this world and the other one (Aakherat or Hereafter). Save me from the fire of Hell. Let me be attentive to Tine praise and thanks and let me present myself in Tine court. Do bestow the same "taufique" (ability) to me which Thou hast bestowed upon Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his Aal(A.S.).

Du'a for the 23rd night: - O Lord of Lailatul Qadr! (Night of Destiny!) Who has made it better than 1000 months! O the Lord of the day and the night and the mountains and oceans, the Lord of light and darkness! O the Lord of the earth and the skies! O the Creator! O the Designer! O Kind! O One Who favours! O Allah Who maintains everything! O Allah! O the Kindest! O Allah! O the Creator of new things! O Allah! O Allah! O Allah! The best names are for Thee alone. Thou hast control over all virtues. I ask Thee to send blessings on Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his Aal (A.S.). Write my name, in this Night of Qadr, among the names of the fortunate. Let my soul keep the company of the martyrs. Let my good deeds be reckoned with "Illiyeen" (those exalted). Forgive my sins. Bestow on me such belief that Thou may be nearest to my heart. Give me such understanding that all the doubts may be removed. Let me be contended over that which has been ordained for me: Let me have goodness and virtues in this world and the next. Save me from the glowing fire of Hell. Encourage me towards Tine remembrance with pleasure and to be penitent. Give me all those virtues that Thou hast given to Muhammad (S.A.W.) and Aal-e-Muhammad (A.S.).

Bidding Farewell To The Month Of Ramadhan

Extracts from Sahifa-Al-Sajjadiyya

O Lord! You have given it (Ramadhan) distinction above all the other months and chosen it out of all other seasons and periods giving it preference over them by having made the Qur'an, the light of guidance to descend in it; And by having made wajib in it fasting ; And by encouraging us to stand (mustahab salaa); And by placing in it Laylatul Qadr (the night of decree) which is better than a thousand months. .... We bid it farewell with the farewell to one whose parting pains us, whose departure fills us with sadness and loneliness .... We say: Salaams upon you - O greatest month of Allah, O Eid of it's friends. Salaams upon you- ..O best of months in days and hours. Salaams upon you - O month in which hopes came near and deeds (good) increased. Salaams upon you - ..O neighbour in whom hearts became tender and sins

decreased. Salaams upon you O helper who assisted us against Shaitan, O companion who made it easy for us to take the path of goodness.

Salaams upon you ... how many sins you erased, how many faults you covered. Salaams upon you – ..how much we longed for you yesterday, and how much we shall long for you tomorrow O Allah! ... with its departure make us depart from our evil deeds... O Allah! Bless Muhammad and his Family, and write for us the like of the reward of one who fasted in it or worshipped you within it until the day of qiyama. O Allah! Forgive our fathers and our mothers and all the people of our religion, those who have gone and those who will pass by until the day of ...qiyama