

Fasting in the Period of Mercy

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (١٨٣))

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:

« الصِّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ، فَلَا يَزِفُّهُ وَلَا يَجْهَلُ، وَإِنِ امْرُؤٌ قَاتَلَهُ أَوْ شَاتَمَهُ فَلْيُقِلُّ: إِنِّي صَائِمٌ مَرَّتَيْنِ...»

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The blessed month of Ramadan is a time graciously given to us for the refinement of worship, morality, societal solidarity and the consciousness of brotherhood. It is also a transformative period where we engage in self-reflection and strengthen our spirituality. As Muslims, during this blessed month, we turn to Allah (swt) through our worship, discipline ourselves and our wills through fasting, purify our wealth through Zakat and Fitrah and strengthen ourselves with the awareness of being a part of the ummah. Thus, we emerge from this month of worship that span day and night purified.

After the obligation of fasting was ordained, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) used to engage in spiritual preparation as Ramadan approached. Giving special importance to Ramadan, he would increase his worship during this month. Ubadah ibn al-Samit (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Prophet (saw) said on the approach of Ramadan, *"The month of Ramadan has come to you, laden with blessings. Allah will shower His mercy upon you in this month, absolve you of your sins, accept your prayers, and He observes your competition in doing good deeds with each other. So show Allah goodness and righteousness. Whoever deprives themselves of Allah's mercy in Ramadan is truly unfortunate."*¹

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The fasting we observe during the month of Ramadan disciplines both our souls and bodies and serves the reform of society. In the Quran, Allah (swt) says, **"O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous"**², indicating that the purpose of fasting is to keep us away from sin.

Dear Jama'ah!

Fasting protects us from our own desires, temptations, and the whispers of Shaytan. By observing fasting with this sensitivity, we are shielded from sins, evil deeds, and thus from the punishment of Hell in the Hereafter. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"Fasting is a shield. So, the one who fasts should avoid obscenity and ignorance. If someone fights him or insults him, he should say: 'I am fasting...'"*³

If we discipline our souls and nourish our spirits with worship, and if we refrain from indulging in sins, thus avoiding ruining our hearts with them, then we will have benefited from this month. Therefore, for those who fast, engaging in righteous deeds, although seemingly small, beautifying their worship, abstaining from what is forbidden and disliked, will enrich their spirituality. For fasting is not only about abstaining from food at certain times of the day; it is also about avoiding sin, refraining from gossip, not hurting others and not wasting time. Therefore, it befits a fasting believer to preserve the state of fasting. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) cautioned us by saying, *"Many are the fasting individuals who gain from their fasting nothing but hunger and thirst, and many are the praying individuals who gain from their night prayers nothing but wakefulness."*⁴

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Let's immerse ourselves in the Qur'an through the recitations we read, strengthening our sense of community through the Taraweeh prayers and benefit from the season of mercy and forgiveness. Just as fasting disciplines our souls and desires, giving Zakat and charity purifies our wealth. Therefore, let's adorn our fasting with financial acts of worship as well. Through Zakat al-Fitr, let's become guests at the tables of our oppressed brothers and sisters in disadvantaged regions and be among their prayers. Let's make the most of this blessed month as if it were the last Ramadan of our lives. May Allah (swt) make those who spend Ramadan with this consciousness among the blessed. Ameen.

¹ Heysemî, Mecmeu'z-zevâid, III, 344.

² Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:183

³ Buhârî, Savm, 2

⁴ İbn Mâce, Sıyâm, 21