

# The Intended Goals and Secrets of Fasting

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## First Khutbah

Praise be to Allah! Our Lord, we do praise You, seek Your assistance, ask for Your forgiveness, repent to You, and acknowledge that You are the sole source of all good.

(The Sheikh cites one line of poetry paraphrased as follows):

*Honest and gracious praise is due to Allah,*

*Oft-repeated by worshippers at dawn and dusk.*

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone with no associate; He has bestowed on us the seasons of bounty and the month of pious deeds and blessings. I equally bear witness that our Prophet and Master, Muhammad, is the Servant and Messenger of Allah. He is the best creature ever who performed prayer and fasting, and the most pious who performed tahaj'jud (spending the nights in prayer) and stayed up to keep vigil in devotion to Allah. May Allah send His profuse Salāt (Graces, Honours, and Mercy) and Peace upon him, his virtuous and noble family, his Companions, and the tābi'īn, as long as light and darkness keep alternating.

Now then, I do enjoin you as well as myself to observe taqwa vis-à-vis Allah (Glory and Might Be to Him), especially that we are amidst one of the most venerable seasons of taqwa. Indeed, the essence of fasting, its real significance and central purpose, is the fulfillment of taqwa vis-à-vis Allah (Be He Glorified in His Sublimity). Allah (May He be praised) says:

**"O you who believe! Observing fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become pious." [Surah al-Baqarah: 183]**

(The Sheikh recites two lines of poetry paraphrased as follows):

*O Man! Hasten to observe taqwa!*

*Accelerate your pace to good deeds as long as you have time,*

*How splendid taqwa is and how guiding is its track!*

*With it, Man elevates otherwise minimal deeds.*

O Muslims! Here is Ramadhan, the month of bounty, blessing, fasting, and night prayer. Here it is overwhelming the Universe with its majestic radiance and filling the hearts with its beauty and splendour. It is a month whose rivers overflow with pious deeds and whose flowers blossom out with good. It is a month during which Muslims eagerly seek to understand its objectives and secrets and enthusiastically listen in awe to its hidden goals and news.

(Again, the Sheikh recites two lines of poetry paraphrased as follows):

*Congratulations! O all followers of Islam, without exception.*

*The blessed month has landed with its bounteous graces.*

*So, greet your month with proper fasting;*

*How glad hearts would feel at its encounter!*

O believers! By adopting a perspective based on the intended goals of Sharī'a to the rulings of fasting and the wisdom behind it, Muslims, obligated to observe the precepts of Islam, would realize that fasting was prescribed for great intended goals and venerated rulings with which he could renew his commended traits of worship and revive his potential for performing good deeds.

Consequently, he will be able to ascend to higher ranks of faith and will be endowed with the qualities characterising the virtuous and the beneficent. This is because the All-Wise Legislator has not restricted fasting only to its formal rituals, such as the prohibition of consuming permissible goods, but has also emphasised spiritual promotion, refinement and preservation of the human self, and the purification of the limbs so as to lift them up from the base material level to the wide horizons of spiritual elevation and to the promotion of faith and values.

The observance of fasting has therefore been designed to achieve interests and increase them and at the same time ward off evils and minimise them. Furthermore, the Five Essentials of life are realised through fasting either positively (when they are preserved) or negatively (when they are not preserved). Another characteristic of fasting is the realisation of ease and the removal of restraint. That is why this great intended goal of fasting has been included in Qur'ānic verses pertaining to it.

Again, Allah (Glory and Might Be to Him) has reserved for this act of worship, unlike the other acts, a special status. He attributed it to Himself (May He be Extolled) in the hadith reported by Imam Muslim and Imam Bukhari in their two Sahih Books: ***“All man’s deeds are left for himself except fasting; it is exclusively mine and it is I who will decide the recompense thereof.”*** This exclusivity will by itself suffice as a source of homage and generosity to fasting Muslims.

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim (Rahimahullah) says, *“Fasting is a curb on pious people, protection of fighters, and an exercise for the virtuous who seek to keep close to their Lord. Unlike other forms of worship, it is reserved for the Lord of the Worlds. In addition, it is an unravelled secret between the servant of Allah and his Lord ... The main point is that because the benefits of fasting are conspicuous to all people endowed with common sense and untwisted nature, Allah has prescribed it for His servants out of compassion for them and as a given charity, and as protection of their health.”*

The most erudite scholar, Imam Al-Kamāl Ibn Al-Humām (Rahimahullah) says in connection to the intended goals of fasting, *“Fasting subdues the evil-inciting nafs (i.e. ego, al-nafs al-ammārah) and curbs its proclivity to inquisitiveness associated with all the limbs.”*

Brothers and sisters in Islam! The most conspicuous intended goal of fasting manifests itself in the preservation of religion and the fulfilment of *taqwa* which is the ultimate goal and the loftiest aim attainable through the prescription of fasting. Imam Al-Baghawi (Rahimahullah) said in his explanation of ***“...that you may become pious”*** [Surah al-Baqarah: 183]: *“It means through fasting, because fasting is the pathway to taqwa, thanks to its potential for subduing the self and crushing its whimsical desires.”* Likewise, it leads to the preservation of the acts of worship, the recital of the Holy Qur'ān, the remembrance of Allah, the supplications, and al-i'tikāf.

The intended goals of fasting also manifest themselves in the preservation of the nafs (the human self) through preventing it from indulging into prohibited instinctual desires and also via stimulating it to be engaged in forms of worship which would bring their performer closer to Allah. Such intended goals also manifest themselves in the preservation of the 'aql (intellect) and the curbing of its defiance by constraining the inlets of Shaytan, subduing its vigorous drives, and by eradicating apprehensions and illusions.

As to the preservation of 'irdh (honour), it is manifest in refraining from backbiting, slandering, and defamation. In this respect, Imam Al-Bukhari reported in his Sahih Book a hadith narrated by Abu

Hurairah رضى الله عنه saying: ***“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Allah is in no need for anybody’s abstention from consuming food and beverages as long as he/she refuses to renounce the fabrication of lies and all sorts of action related to it.’”***

As to the preservation of māl (property), it is manifest in charity acts, forms of expenditure, abstention from extravagance and abuse, and in helping the poor, the miserable, and the afflicted.

(The Sheikh cites two lines of poetry paraphrased as follows):

*Fasting is indeed commiseration and charity,  
As decreed by the Qur’ān and logical evidence,  
How wonderful fasting is when coupled with charitable acts;  
It never involves multiplied deprivation.*

O Ummah of tawhīd and unity! The intended goals of fasting will never be attained and the rationale behind it will remain pointless unless the teachings of the Chosen Prophet ﷺ are followed. Al-Imam Al-Mawardi (Rahimahullah) says, ***“He ﷺ was endowed with so much generosity and open-handedness that he used to offer people whatever at hand and favour others by giving them solicited and dear objects.”***

(The Sheikh cites two lines of poetry paraphrased as follows):

*O fasting fellow who renounced sins out of piety,  
Keeping close company to patience and hardship,  
Listen to glad tidings offering you mercy on Resurrection Day,  
Bordered with benefaction, musk and frankincense.*

So, observe taqwa, servants of Allah, and achieve the intended goals of fasting both in speech and in action. Be compassionate with one another! Be tolerant with one another! Pardon one another! Reconcile with one another! Indeed, Ramadan is an opportunity to experience the superb feelings targeted by the true Islamic religion. The achievement of this great mission is a responsibility shared by the home, the family, the masjid, the school, society, mass media, and modern channels of communication.

What will be the reward for that? It will be no less higher ranks in Paradise accessed through the Rayyān Gate.

Therefore, blessed be those who are fasting Ramadhan and glad tidings for those who spend its nights praying!

I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan: ***“The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur’an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month, he must observe fasts that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe fasts must be made up] from other days. Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number, and that you must magnify Allah for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.”*** [Surah al-Baqarah: 185]

O Allah! We implore You to bless us by the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah, to make them beneficial to us and to raise our status through the verses and wisdom they contain! This being said, I ask Allah, the Almighty, to forgive you, me and all Muslims for all sins; so ask Him for forgiveness and turn to Him in repentance, for my Lord is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful for those who repent to Him!

## Second Khutbah

Praise be to Allah Who has made fasting a protection and a means leading to Paradise! I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah alone, the Ilāh (God) of mankind and Jinn and that our Prophet, Muhammad, is His servant and Messenger, the greatest mercy and most generous blessing ever. May Allah's *Salat* and Peace be upon him, his family and Companions, the callers to the Book of Allah and the protectors of the *Sunnah* and upon the *tabi'in* and those who followed them in righteousness until the Day of Judgement!

Now, then, Observe *taqwa*, O servants of Allah, and keep up the good deeds and the supplications hoping for their acceptance (by Allah) throughout this month of mercy, forgiveness and generosity; then praise the Benefactor that you may win over His satisfaction and blessings.

Dear brothers and sisters in faith, Those are but a few examples of the intended goals and secrets of fasting, and that is just a glimmer of its light and effects. How much the Muslim Ummah stands in dire need to benefit from the lessons and intended goals of fasting! How much it stands in dire need of following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ during this great month, hanging on to the straightforward course he set for it, holding on to the strong Rope of Allah, making recourse to His Sharia' as well as highlighting its advantages and benefits, defending Islamic values and principles, and achieving consensus on the prescribed religious duties and generally accepted truths of Sharia'.

O Ummah of Islam! O Ummah of fasting and late night praying!

However, it is a pity indeed to see grief wrenching the hearts of Muslims as they experience the early honourable days and blessed nights of this month on account of the bloodshed and the partisan and sectarian conflicts taking place in a number of Muslim countries, in addition to the injustice, aggression, and terrorism targeting innocent people in the blessed land of Palestine and Al-Aqsa, and in Sham.

Therefore, I eagerly issue this call for all; it is a call crowned with the honour of time (the month of Ramadhan) and place (Makkah) to resolve these crises, put an end to these conflicts, stop the bloodshed of Muslims, hold back wrongdoers and oppressors from continuing their aggression and tyranny against our brothers and sisters who are oppressed in their religion everywhere.

Let all Muslims in the East and West be delighted with this great season! Let them enjoy this holy month and work towards bolstering the values of tolerance, dialogue, moderation, compassion, cooperation among themselves, and renouncing violence and terrorism.

Perhaps -by Allah's Will and Generosity- such a season shall serve as a springboard towards establishing unity within the Muslim Ummah around the Book and the Sunnah and consolidating security and stability in this blessed country, home of the Two Holy Mosques. It is a country that is strong thanks to its faith, the unity of its people, and the solidarity between ruler and subject. This -Allah Willing- shall suffice to cause the arrows of the envious and those holding grudges against it to fall clumsily, push back the advocates of sedition from carrying out their plotting, safeguard the homeland of *tawhīd* and unity, and maintain its assets and interests, and **"Allah has full power and control over His Affairs, but most of men know not."** [Surah Yusuf: 21]

Ask Allah -may He have mercy on you- to send His *Salat* and Peace on the Prophet of mercy and guidance, the best of those who have ever observed fasting and undertaken late night praying as your Almighty Lord, the Lord of the Two Worlds, has commanded you to do so. He so truthfully put it thus:

"Allâh sends His Salât on the Prophet, and also His angels (ask Allâh to bless him). O you who believe! Send your Salât on him, and greet him with the Islâmic way of greeting." [Surah al-Aḥzâb: 56]

The Prophet ﷺ himself said: **"Whoever prays for blessings upon me once, Allah, in return, blesses him with the likes of ten such blessings."**

(The Sheikh quotes two lines of poetry in this regard paraphrased as follows):

*O you, who wish for the best of intercession from Ahmad*

*Ask Allah to send His Salat and Peace upon him,*

*For the Lord of might is sending His Salat and Peace upon him for*

*As long as a servant of His observes fasting or a Muslim performs late night praying.*

*O Allah! Send Your Salat and Peace on the Master of all mankind ever and the Mercy sent unto the Worlds, our leader, and beloved Prophet, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah! O Allah! Be content with His rightly guided Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman, and Ali, and on all the other Companions, on the tabi'īn, those who righteously followed them till the Day of Judgement, and on us along with them, by Your Mercy and Generosity, O You, the Most Generous!*

*O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant glory to Islam and Muslims, and fail polytheism and polytheists! O Allah! Destroy the enemies of religion (Islam)! Make this country, as well as all Muslim countries, secure and tranquil!*

*O Allah! Grant us safety in our homelands! O Allah! Grant us safety in our homelands and make righteous our Imams and leaders! O Allah! Support our leader with the Truth! O Allah! Guide him to what You love and what pleases You, and lead him to virtue and righteousness! O Allah! Grant him a righteous retinue that shows him what is good and helps him do it!*

*O Allah! Help all Muslim leaders to abide by your law and follow the sunnah of Your Prophet (May Allah's Salat and Peace be upon him). O Allah! Make them an asset to Your believing servants!*

*O Allah! Help maintain for this country its faith, leadership, unity, security, and stability, O You, the Lord of Majesty and Bounty! O Allah! Whoever intends to carry out evil deeds against us, against Islam and Muslims, against our homeland, our security and our unity, O Allah, make him busy with himself! Let his plotting be to his own detriment, and make his destruction in his planning, O You, the All-hearing!*

*O Allah! Grant victory to our Mujahideen brothers (in the cause of Allah) and those who are oppressed in their religion wherever they may be! O Allah! Grant them victory in Palestine! O Allah! Save Al-Aqsa Mosque from the 'claws' of those aggressors and occupiers among the Zionists! O Allah! Let it be standing in dignity till the Day of Judgement!*

*O Allah! Grant our brothers and sisters in Syria victory over the oppressors and tyrants! O Lord of the Worlds, Lord of Majesty and Bounty! O Allah! Stop the bloodshed of Muslims! O Allah! Stop their bloodshed, set right their conditions and lift the siege around them, O You, the Lord of Majesty and Bounty!*

**"... Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!"**[Surah al-Baqarah: 201]

*O Allah! Grant success to our security forces! O Allah! Grant success to our security forces and all of those in the service of the Two Holy Mosques!, O Allah! Reward them generously for their efforts in the service of Umrah performers, O You, the Lord of Majesty and Bounty!*

*O our Lord! Accept from us! You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing! Accept our repentance; You are the Forgiving, the Merciful! Do forgive us, our parents, and all the Muslims, those who are dead and those still alive, as You are All-Hearing, All-Near and All-Answering of our supplications!*

*Glorified be our Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power! You are free from what they wrongly attribute unto You! May peace be upon all the Messengers! And “praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!”*

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**Translated by Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University**

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