

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

- **ALI 194: Sessions 1 & 2**

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- ***Preparation for Holy Ramadan***

- **27 & 28 Shaban 1432**

- **July 29 & 30, 2011**

Qur'anic passage 2: 183 - 185

• يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ 183 أَيَّامًا
مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۖ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۖ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ
طَعَامُ مِسْكِينَ ۖ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ ۖ
وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ 184 شَهْرُ
رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ
مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۖ

Translation of 2:183 - 185

- **183** You who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may be mindful of God. **184** Fast for a specific number of days, but if one of you is ill, or on a journey, on other days later. For those who can fast only with extreme difficulty, there is a way to compensate— feed a needy person. But if anyone does good of his own accord, it is better for him, and fasting is better for you, if only you knew. **185** It was in the month of Ramadan that the Qur'an was revealed as guidance for mankind, clear messages giving guidance and distinguishing between right and wrong.

Qur'anic philosophy of fasting

- Holy Qur'an 2:183: لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ – so that you may acquire *taqwaa* (piety, Godwary, God conscious, dutiful)
- Holy Qur'an 2:184: وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ – and fasting is better for you, if only you knew
- Holy Qur'an 2:185 – يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ – God wishes ease for you, not hardship, وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ He wants you to complete the prescribed period, مَا وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ هَذَاكُمْ and to glorify Him for having guided you, تَشْكُرُونَ – so that you may be thankful.
- => achieve *taqwaa*, knowledge of fasting, hidden benefits, not difficult, completion of period, help in glorification, part of guidance & being grateful to Allah

Qur'anic passage 2:185 - 186

● فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۖ وَمَنْ كَانَ
مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۚ يُرِيدُ
اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا
الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُم وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ 185 وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي
قَرِيبٌ أَجِيبْ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا
لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ 186

Translation of passage 2:185-186

- So any one of you who is present that month should fast, and anyone who is ill or on a journey should make up for the lost days by fasting on other days later. God wants ease for you, not hardship. He wants you to complete the prescribed period and to glorify Him for having guided you, so that you may be thankful. **186** [Prophet], if *My* servants ask you about *Me*, *I* am near. *I* respond to those who call *Me*, so let them respond to *Me*, and believe in *Me*, so that they may be guided.

Discussion on the passage 2:183 -186

- Section- ruku' 23/40 in surat al-Baqarah
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- Main passage on Fasting & Ramadan
 - Comprehensive details on Fasting rules
 - Philosophy of fasting: past nations, not hardship
 - Revelation of the Holy Qur'an
 - Glorifying Allah & being grateful to Him
 - Discussion on Du'aa (supplication)
 - Unique ayat on Du'aa – 7 x 1st personal pronoun

Questions to ponder on Ramadan prep

- 1) Is there a need to prepare for the month?
- 2) How many of us do prepare for Ramadan?
- 3) When do we begin the preparation?
- 4) How do we prepare for the month?
- 5) Is the prep subject to place & who we are?
- 6) Did the Ma'sumeen prepare for the month?
- 7) Does the preparation make any difference?
- 8) Can we prepare in the beginning of Ramadan?

Niyyat: clear, sincere & continuous

- 1) Intention alone can make a big difference
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- 2) Hadith 37 & 38 in *Sharullah fil-Kitab wal-Sunnah*
 - 3) Wrong intention alone can break your fast
 - 4) Practical suggestions on Niyyat:
 - a) Compete to see who can come w/ good niyyat
 - b) *al-a 'maalu bin-niyyah* so reward in line w/ niyyat
 - c) Note down all you plan to do during Ramadan
 - d) Give your pledge to Allah & the Imam al-'Asr
- HP (s): فَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ بِنِيَّاتٍ صَادِقَةٍ وَقُلُوبٍ طَاهِرَةٍ

Significance of Ramadan

Holy Prophet (s): O people! A month has approached you laden with blessing (*barakah*), mercy (*rahmah*) and forgiveness (*maghfirah*). With Allah, it is the best of all months, its days are the best of days; its nights are the best of nights; its hours are the best of hours.

Imam al-Sajjad (a): And praise belongs to Allah, Who appointed among those roads (of His beneficence) His month, the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting, the month submission, the month of purity, the month of examination, month of *qiyaam*, in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance to the people, and as clear signs of the Guidance and the *furqaan*. (*Sahifa* 44:3)

Divine favors to comprehend greatness of the Ramadan

- Not everyone is blessed to know its *fadhilat* - excellence
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- Some companions lacked the ability to know the HP
 - Many more never realized the reality of Imam Ali
 - We need Divine help to know merits of Ramadan
 - This means, advance preparation is essential
 - Imam al-Sajjad (a): *O Allah, . . . Inspire us with knowledge of its excellence, veneration of its sacredness, and caution against what You have forbidden within it (Sahifa 44:6)*
 - Nabi Shu'ayb (a): (وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۖ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ) *I have no success except thru Allah's (help): I trust in Him and always turn to Him (HQ 11:88)*

Special favors await us in Ramadan

HP (s): It is a month in which you are invited to be the guests of Allah. In it, you are made worthy of enjoying Allah's Grace and Honor. Breathing in it constitutes glorifying the Almighty, and your sleeping amounts to worshipping Him. (from his sermon)

- It (Ramadan) is the month, whose beginning is mercy, its middle, forgiveness and its end, emancipation from the fire (of hell) *Bihaar al-Anwaar* 93:342
- Surely, the month of Ramadan is a great month. Allah, multiplies in it the good deeds, erases in it the sins and elevates in it the ranks. *Wasaa'il al-Shia'h* 10:312

Practical suggestions - 1

- Use of fasting (hunger & thirst) as reminder to remain God conscious & dutiful to His commands
- Acquire knowledge how fasting is better
- Never even think or have fantasy that it is difficult
- Complete the month – avoid traveling & self sickness
- Do *dhikr* of Allah: mentally, verbally & physically
- See how fasting can enhance *hidayah*
- Thank Allah for His religion, laws, ability to fast, numerous favors, taste of eating/drinking, ability to eat & drink, opportunity to reflect & thank, bounties to share, preserving the Qur'an & sending Guides

Practical suggestions - 2

- Imam Sajjad: *Month Submission, Purity & Examination*

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- How do we improve our Islam? Content with what Allah has given, Allah's decree is best for me, etc.
 - How do we purify ourselves? Purge selfishness, lust, disobey *nafs ammarah*, experience hardship
 - Do we feel being examined? Thru hunger, thirst, sharing wealth, reining anger, controlling seeing and hearing, allowing subordinate time to worship, being self dependant, etc.

Practical suggestions - 3

- Imam al-Sajjad (a): *Ramadan is the month of Qiyaam*

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- Are we saying our prayers on prime time?
 - Are we saying the *nafila* prayers, especially *tahjjud*?
 - Have we improved the quality of our prayers?
 - Are we lengthening the prayers thru long suras, extended *dhikr* in ruku` & sajda
 - Are we reciting long & beautiful du'as in *qunut*?
 - Have we improved concentration in prayers?
 - Have we begun enjoying our salat?

Practical suggestions 4

- Holy Prophet (s): *Ramadan is the spring for the poor*
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- Imam Ridha: *Fasting is to experience lack of food & drinks*
 - Daily Du'a after salat: *allahummah adkhlil 'alaa ahlil Qubur*
 - Are we gathering info on whom to help?
 - Are we preparing ourselves to share the wealth?
 - Can we have a good budget for charity?
 - Are we training to eat & drink only the essential?
 - How about giving *qard hasanah* to the needy to improve their living conditions & stop them from begging
 - What can we do to *islah* of Muslims?

For further reading

- Sermon of the Holy Prophet (s) welcoming the month of Ramadan
- Du'aa No. 44 in *Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya*
- The booklet *Divine Invitation* by M Khalfan
- *Fast of the month of Ramadan* by Yasin Jibouri