

Rituals of the Holy Month of Ramadan

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SAHAR (Morning Meal)

The time for the completion of your morning meal is about ten minutes before "Subh-e-Sadiq" is 80 minutes before sunrise. The following Du'a may be recited at the time of Sahar.

Bismillah-Ir Rahman-Ir Raheem

Yaa mafza'ee 'inda kurbatee wa yaa ghausee "inda shiddatee ilaika faze'to wa bika-staghasto wa bika luzto laa aloozo bi-siwaaka wa laa atlob-ul-faraja illa minka fa-aghisni wa farrij,'anni yaa mai-yaqbal-ul-yaseera wa ya'foo 'an-il-kaseere iqbal minni-l-yaseera wa'fo'an-il-kaseere innaka ant-al-Ghaffor-ar-Raheem.

Allahumma inni as'aloka eemaannan tobaashiro bihi qalbi wa yaqeenan saadiqan hatta a'lamo annahoo lain-yuseebani illa maa katabta li wa razzeni min-al-aishe bema qasamta li ya Arham-ar-Raheemeen, Yaa "uddati fi kurbati wa yaa Sahebi fi Shiddati wa yaa Waliyyi fi ne'mati wa va Ghaeti fi raghbati anta-s-Saatiro 'aurati w-al-Aamino ra'oati w-al-muqeelo, 'asrati faghfir li khateeati yaa Arham-ar-Raahemeen. Allahumma salle 'ala Muhammadin wa Aale Muhammad.

"O My lord, my shelter in my hardships, and my helper in my difficulties, I take shelter under Thee, and appeal to Thee only. I want my safety from thee and from nobody else. I do not want to be dependent on anybody but Thee only. So accepts a few good deeds and pardons many sins, accept my few deeds and pardon my many sins. Verily, Thou art the best pardoner. O Allah! I ask Thee for such an Iman (belief) as shall bring my heart close to Thee. I want such a positive belief that I may be sure of receiving only the matters that Thou hast made obligatory for me. O Most Compassionate One, O my Helper in my difficulties, O my Companion in my hardships, O my Lord, O Grantor of my righteous desires, cover me under Thy Grace and guard me against fear, O the Forgiver of my sins, pardon my errors, O Most Merciful One.

O God, bless Muhammad(S.A.W.) and Aal-e-Muhammad(S.A.W.).

The Niyat (intent)for Keeping Fast:

The fasts of the month of Ramazan are obligatory. When the Crescent moon is sighted, we should declare to ourselves that we will keep all fasts during this month to attain nearness to Allah (wajib qurbatan ilallah). Just like Namaz (prayer) the Niyat of fasting is mental, and so is the case with Niyat of every action. To declare it in words is not necessary. However, the Niyat

is that you are keeping the fast, remembering the numerical order wajib qurbatan ilallah. Offer the morning wajib Namaz (prayers) at its appropriate time.

Iftaree (Breaking of Fast)

The time for breaking the fast is 12 to 15 minutes after sunset. It is better to offer 'Magrib Namaz' and then break the fast. The following Du'a may be recited at the time of breaking the fast:

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ صُمْتُ وَعَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ
Allahumma laka sumto wa alla rizqeka aftarto wa alayka tawakkalto

O Lord! I fasted for Thee and have ended the fast on sustenance provided by Thee, and Thee " only do I trust.

According to the Hadith of Imam Musa al-Kazim (A.S.) he, who recites this du'a, will get the Sawaab of all those who have fasted on that day. According to the Hadith of Imam Hasan (A.S.) for every person who fasts, a du'a is accepted at the time of Iftaree. One should therefore, recite the following du'a, at the time of taking his first morsel of food.

.BISMILLAH-IR RAHMAN-IR RAHEEM. Yaa Waaseal Magferate igfirlee

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ يَا وَاسِعَ الْمَغْفِرَةِ اغْفِرْ لِي

(I begin) in the name of Allah the Beneficent and the Merciful, O Lord of forgivers, forgive me.)

The following Dua's may be recited after every Namaz:

BISMILLAH-IR RAHMAN-IR RAHEEM.

Yaa Aleeyo Yaa Azeem - Yaa Ghafooro Ya Raheem! Anta Rabbul Azimul lazi laisa kamislihi shai-un wa huwas Samiul Basir wa haaza shahr-un 'azzamtaho wa karramtaho wa sharraftaho wa fazzaltaho alash-shuhoor wa huwassshahru! lazee farazta siyaamaho alayya wa huwash-shehro Ramazaan nal-lazee anzalta feehil Quraan huda-l-lin naasi wa bayyenatin minal hudaa wal furqaan wa ja 'alta feehe lailatal qadre wa ja 'altaha khairam min alfe shahrin fa yaa zal manni wala yumanno "alaika munna alaiya bi-fakaake raqabati minnan naare fi man tamunno alaihe wa adkhilnil jannata birahmatika Yaa arhamar Rahemeen. Allahumma salle 'ala Muhammadin wa Aale Muhammad.

(I begin) in the name of Allah the Beneficent and the Merciful.

O High! O Great! O Pardoner! O Merciful! Thou art the Great Lord. There is none like Thee. Thou seest and hearest. And this, the month of Ramazan, is full of Thy grace and mercy. Thou

hast bestowed on it honour and distinction, more that on any other month. This is the holy month of Ramazan in which Thou hast made the fasts obligatory on me. This is the Holy month of Ramazan in which Thou hast sent down the sacred Quran which guides the people to the Right Path, contains clear signs of guidance and distinguishes between right and wrong. Thou hast made one of its nights as "Lailaul Qadr" a night which is better than a thousand months. O! One who favours all and is favored by none, save me from hell along with Thy favourites and admit me in paradise due to Thy mercy, O most Merciful! Aoozo bijalali wajhikal karim an yanqaziya anni shehro Ramazan aw yatloal fajro min lailati haazihi walaka qibalee taabe 'atun aw zanbun toazzibunee alaih. O Allah, I seek Thy protection from any omissions during this month of Ramazan. so that no night of this holy month might pass into dawn, without my duty to Thee remaining unfulfilled.

The following Du'a may be recited every night:

BISMILLAH-IR RAHMAN-IR RAHEEM.

Allahumma Adkhil alla ahlil quboor us sooroor.

Allahum-,aghne kulla faqir.

Allahumm ashba kulla jai'-in.

Allahumm akso kulla "uryanin.

Allahumm aqze daina kulla madeenin

Allahumm farrij an kulle makrubin;

Allahumm rudda kulla gharibin ila wataneh

Allahumm fukka kulla aseerin

Allahumm asle kulla faasidin min ommoril muslimmeen

Allahumm-mashfe kulla mareezin

Allahumm sudda faqranaa bighinaaka

Allahumm ghai-ir su-a haalina bi-husne haalika

Allahumm-maqzean-nid-dian wa aghninaa minal faqre Innaka alaa kulle shai-in-qadeer.

The A'maal of Shab-e-Qadr: (19th, 21st, and 23rd of Ramazan)

Shab-e-Qadr is the night which is the best night among the nights of the whole year. The "A'maal" (religious performance) of this night are better than the A'maal of 1000 months. In this night the divine annual decree is passed. The angels and Rooh (A highly dignified Angel) descend on earth, this 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 the three nights. Others

are for particular nights. The common A'maals are:

1) 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 one's bath."

2) To offer two Rakats Namaz. In every Rakat recite Sura-al-Hamd. (Sura Fateha) and Sura-al-Tauhid (Sura Ikhlas) seven times and after finishing the prayer recite: 70 times "Astagferullaaha wa atoobo elaihe," i.e. "I repent for my sins and seek pardon from God."

3) The Quran 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 have obtained deliverance from hell. in the name of this holy Book sent by Thee, whatever there be in the Book, including Isme-e-A'azam and Azmaa-e-Husnaa, and the things to be dreaded, the things that may be expected and desired, like blessings of paradise. Do forgive me through the grace of this book." (After this he may beg from Allah whatever he wants).

4) He should place the Holy Quran on his head and say, "Allaahumma be haqqe haazal Quran 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 Quran 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 Thy obligation that is on them. No one else recognises the right and truth more than Thee," (after this he should repeat 10 times each):-

Beke ya Allaaho

Be Muhammadin

Be Aliyin

Be Faatema

Bil Hasane

Bil Husaine

Be Ali-ibnil Husain

Be Muhammad ibne Aliyin

Be Ja'far ibne Muhammadin

Be Moosabne Ja'farin

Be Ali-ibne Moosa

Be Muhammad ibne Aliyin

Be Ali-Ibe Muhammadin

Bil Hasan ibne aliyyin

Bil Hujjate-il-Qa'eeme

(Then he may beg from Allah whatever he wants).

(5a) To recite the Ziarat of Imam Husain(A.S.), Ziarat-e-Waris. 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 Imam-e-Husain".

(5b) To recite Du'a Jaushan-e-Saghir.

6) One should keep oneself awake throughout these three nights. The vigil during these nights carries great Sawab (heavenly reward).

7) To offer 100 Rakats of Namaz. It has been highly recommended to recite after Sura Fateha (Sura-al-Hamd) 10 times Sura Ikhlas (Qul Howallah).

8) "Astagferullaah Rabbi wa atoobo elaihe" 100 times (i.e., "I repent for my sins and I seek pardon from God who is my Sustainer").

9) "Allaahummal'an qatalatal Ameerul Momeneen" 100 times (i.e., "O Allah! Thy contempt be upon the assassin of Ameerul Mimeneen Ali ibne Abi Talib").

10) To recite the following Suras from the Holy Quran:

ANKABOOT (The Spider) 29th Sura.

ROOM (the Roman Empire) 30th Sura.

DUKHAN (Smoke or Mist) 44th Sura.

11) This du'a may be recited:-

I have passed the evening as a very humble servant of Thee. I have no control over my gains and losses. I cannot remove any evil from myself. I bear testimony against myself. I admit my weakness and inability to manage my affairs. Bestow Thy blessings on Muhammad (S.A.W) and his Aal (A.S.). Whatever Thou hast promised, fulfil. Verily! I am Thy 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 of Thy kindness. Do not deny me the acceptance of my prayer, though it may be delayed, whether it pertains to sorrow or happiness, peace and tranquillity or hardship and vicissitudes or to invocation for blessings. Thou hearest and acceptest invocations in every condition.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) when asked what should one beg of Allah during these nights, said: "Ask for your safety (here and in the hereafter)." O Allah! Whatever is decreed and ordained by Thee during Laila tul Qadr (Night of Power) is final and of wisdom. Whatever changes were

effected in the night in previous decrees could not be changed by anybody else. Do let me be one of those whose Haj is acceptable, whose efforts are rewarded, whose sins have been pardoned and whose errors have been forgiven. Add to the span of my life increase my livelihood and fulfil my righteous desires.

Du'a for the 19th night:

O One, who was before everything and then brought everything into existence. Thou wilt remain whilst all else will be destroyed. O the One, sole and solitary exception 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. To Thee alone is due the praise which cannot be offered to anyone but Thee. Therefore bestow peace and blessings on Muhammad (S.A.W.) and Aal-e-Muhammad (A.S.) such as nobody else has the power to bestow.

Du'a for the 21st night:

O One who turns day into night and night into day. O One, who brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the 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 attributes are for Thee. The grandeur and the glory 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 "Iliyeen" (exalted). Let my sins be condoned. Bestow on me that belief by virtue of which Thou may be nearest to my heart, that "Iman" which may remove all doubts from my mind. Let me be satisfied with whatever Thou hast ordained for me. Let me have the virtues of this world and of the hereafter. Save me from the fire of hell. Let me always attend to my duty to praise Thee and to thank Thee, and let me present myself in Thy court. Do bestow the same "taufique" (guidance) to me which Thou hast bestowed upon Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his Aal (A.S.).

Du'a for 23rd night:

O Lord of Lailatul Qadr! (Night of Power). Who has made it better than a thousand 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 the Compassionate! O One who favours! O Allah, who maintains everything! O Allah! O the most

benevolent! 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 Muhammed (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 an understanding that all the doubts may be removed. Let me be contented with what has been ordained for me. Let me have goodness and virtues in this world and in the next. Save me from the glowing fire of hell. Encourage me to remember Thee with devotion and pleasure and to be penitent. Bless me with virtues that Thou hast bestowed on Muhammads (S.A.W.) and his Aal (A.S.).

I'D-UL-FITR

I'd-ul-Fitr is linked with the holy month of Ramazan. It signifies the end of the month of fasting. In view of the great significance attached to this day of I'd, numerous traditions consisting of prayers and worship of God on this day, have been quoted from the Holy Prophet(S.A.W.) and his Ahl-al-Bait(A.S.).

Taking a solemn bath (Ghusl) on the night preceding I'd is highly recommended (sunnat). This is a night of great sanctity and propfound virtues and should preferably be spent in worship and prayer to God.

Imam Zainul Abedin(A.S.) used to spend this whole night in devotion, and has said: "This night is as important as that of Shab-e-Qadr" (that is to say, the night when the Holy Quran was first revealed to our Holy Prophet).

It is quoted from the Holy Prophet that "one who offers six Rakat prayers on this night reciting in each Rakat, Sura "al-Hamd" (Sura-e-Fateha) once and Sura 'Qul Huwallah' (Sura-e-Ikhlās) five times, God will pardon his sins".

Haris Anwar narrates that Hazrat Ali(A.S.), on this night, after Maghrib prayers, used to offer two Rakat prayers. In the first one he used to recite Sura "Al-amd (Sura-e-Fateha) Once and Sura 'Qul Huwallah' (Sura-e-Ikhlās) one hundred times, and in the other both the Suras only once. After completion of the prayers he would bow his head in prostration and recite "Atubo Ellallah... (I return unto Thee repentent O Lord), 100 times and then would say, "I swear, O Allah, Thou hast sole command over my life."

If anyone will, in this way, offer two Rakat prayers, The Beneficent One will fulfil his righteous wish.

The conception of I'd in Islam is not confined only to celebrational extravagance, luxurious feasts, friendly handshakes and embraces. The Muslims should rather devote this day to the worship of God and should beseech Him to approve their virtuous deeds and forgive their sins.

This is because the doors of God's pardon are kept open this day and blessings are bountiful. Once Imam Hasan(A.S.) noticed some people in a most jovial mood merry making on the occasion of I'd. He, turning to his companions said. "God has prescribed for this month of Ramazan a course of discipline for His slaves to render their due homage to their Lord and earn His pleasure. Some of them who have fasted successfully reached their goal, and those who did not fast have lingered behind and have missed a golden opportunity. When reward is assured for fasting, how strange it is on the part of those who do not fast to indulge in idle pastimes. I swear by God, if the curtains of the unseen (Ghaib) were to be lifted today, both the virtuous and the sinful would see the reward of their good and evil deeds respectively."

I'D PRAYER

It is considered by tradition to be an obligatory (Wajib) Prayer, Though technically it is an optional prayer with the injunction that it is preferable to offer it even if it is optional (Sunnat Muvakkadah).

Ghusl (Purification bath) on I'd day is sunnat which should be taken under a shelter and not under the open sky.

Before offering I'd prayers, it is recommended to have a breakfast of dates. The specified time of I'd prayer is between sunrise and the sun's initial decline (Zawal). If this prayer happens to be missed it cannot be offered late as "Qaza". Women are exempted from this prayer. It is "Mustahab" (recommended) to offer I'd prayers with two Khutbas (sermons) elaborating the religious rules pertaining to Zakat-e-Fitr, its conditions, its quantity and the time of its payment and the persons who are best qualified to receive it.

This prayer consists of two Rakats. Niyyat (intention) should be in these words: "I resolve to offer two Rakats Namaz I'd, Sunnat Qurbatan Ellallah" i.e. Seeking the nearness to God. This should be followed by "Takbeer" (Allah-o-Akbar). In the first Rakat after Sura 'Al-Hamd' (sura Fateha) recite Sura 'A'la (The Most High). Then five times Dua-e-Qunoot followed by Ruku and then Sajdah. Then up again for the second Rakat. In the second Rakat after Sura 'AlHamd' (sura Fateha), recite Sura Shams ('The Sun') and four times 'Dua-e-Qunoot'. After this the namaz should be completed like the morning prayer.

FITRA

Allah says in the Holy Quran that one who gives "Zakat" and remembers Him will get salvation. Here, Zakat means "Fitra" and remembrance of God means the recitation of the following Takbir on the night and morning of I'd-ul-Fitr.

"Allaaho Akbar, Allaaho Akbar, Laa ilaaha illallaaho Wallaaho Akbar, Allaaho Akbar, wa lillaahil Hamd. Allaaho Akbar, Alla maa hadanaa," The meaning of the above is: Allah is Great, Allah is Great, there is no one worthy of praise but Allah, and Allah is Great; Allah is Great, All praise be to Allah, it is He who guides."

Fitra is compulsory on those who can afford it, and it is a sin not to give it. Hazrat Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq(A.S.) has said that fasts do not attain perfection without Fitra, just as namaz does not attain perfection without invoking the blessings of Allah on Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his Aal in Tashahhud. Hazrat Imam Jafer-e-Sadiq(A.S.) used to instruct his accountant to take out fitra for each individual including slaves and servants-male and female-of his household without exception, as, he feared that one whose Fitra was not taken out might die within that year.

Fitra is dependent on the major item of food consumed by a person during the year. This may be rice, wheat, barley, dates, etc. In weight, Fitra should be three kilograms of food per person. It is also permissible to pay cash of equivalent value. It is obligatory on the head of the family to give Fitra of all persons (including servants of both sexes of any caste or creed) that take food in his house.

If a guest-Muslim or non-Muslim arrives at one's house before the night of I'd-ul-Fitr and dines with his host, it is incumbent on the latter to give the former's fitra. If the guest arrives after sunset of the night of I'd-ul-Fitr, Fitra is not obligatory even if he dines with his host. Even when the guest arriving before sunset does not dine, Fitra is obligatory on the host. In this case it is better if both the host and the guest give Fitra.

If one's wife is at her parent's house on the night of I'd-ul-Fitr, her parents should take out her Fitra.

On the last day of the month of Ramazan, if a person arranges a Majlis which finishes after sunset (Maghrib) and if offers Niyaz or food to his guests, he does not have to give Firta for them.

Fitra should be given to deserving Momins who do not have enough income for the maintenance of their families for the whole year.

Fitra cannot be given to one's dependents. But, it is better to give it to non-dependent deserving relatives.

Next in order of preference are deserving neighbours and then any other deserving pious

persons. Fitra from Syeds can be given to Syeds or non-Syeds. Fitra from non-Syeds cannot be given to Syeds.

If deserving persons are not easily found, Fitra should be sent to places where such persons are found, or the amount should be sent to a Mujtahid who would do the needful in distributing the same. It is not essential that the recipient of Fitra is an "Aadil" (just) but it is necessary to ensure that it is not given to anyone likely to use it in acts of sin, e.g. drinking liquor, gambling, etc.

Although it is permissible to send Fitra to any place, it is preferable if it is distributed to a deserving person locally.

The time for giving Fitra is from the night of I'd-ul-Fitr (Ramazan I'd) upto the noon (Zohar) of I'd-ul-Fitr. If this is not possible for some reason, the amount of Fitra should be set apart from other monies and disbursed when deserving persons are available or may be sent to a Mujtahid for required distribution.

IN RETROSPECT

And now that the holy month of glory has departed and I'd is over, let us look back to the lessons it has taught us, and let us pray to God that the things we practised-the recitation of the Holy Quran, the saying of prayers (Namaz) regularly, the charity which we did, the poor that we fed, the good manners we displayed, and the self-restraint that we exercised, should be with us in our every day lives throughout the year and O Muslims, know ye that these are the very acts that take us nearer to Allah. And Allah has said, "Then do ye remember Me: I will remember you, Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith," 2:152.

"If you are grateful I will add more (favours unto you); But if ye show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible". 14:7.

And those who have been indifferent-and have wished that there was no such thing as this month of Ramazan and who on sighting the new moon had a dejected face, should remember this Ayat of the Quran:

"Call on Me: I will answer your (Prayer)..But those who are too arrogant to serve Me, will surely find themselves in hell, in humiliation." 40:60 But can ye not see. O men, the mighty works of God in the heavens and the earth? The glorious splendour of the night with the glittering stars and the resplendent splendour of the sun? How the earth with its spacious expanse and its mountains, yields moisture and pasture, and feeds and sustains men and cattle, through God's Providence.

Ah! transgress not the bounds set by God and earn not the fire of punishment, but fear God and

His judgment, and prepare daily for the Garden of perpetual bliss. Delay not! The judgment is
.sure and it is nigh