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ON  
ISLAM AND QUR'AN**

**No. 5**

***SAUM* (FASTING):  
A UNIQUE EXERCISE IN  
SELF-PURIFICATION AND  
SELF-RESTRAINT**

**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**

Indian School of Excellence Trust  
(INDSET)  
Hyderabad - INDIA

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## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

### FOREWORD

It is a distressing fact that most of the Muslims lack proper understanding about the universal relevance of the Qur'anic Message which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) for the guidance of all mankind. There is considerable misapprehension too about Islam and the Message of the Qur'an in the minds of Non-Muslims. The **Indian School of Excellence Trust (INDSET)** is making a humble endeavour through a series of monographs on Islam and the holy Qur'an to project the image of Islam in its proper perspective and to explain the significance of the Message of the Qur'an in a scientific and systematic way.

The basic purpose of rituals in Islam is to elevate man from mundane level to great spiritual heights. The object of obligatory observance of fasting for one full lunar month is not merely to test the physical capacity of a person (he/she) to put up without a morsel of food or a drop of drink from sunrise to sunset but to see if he/she can simultaneously refrain from evil deeds and even evil thoughts. The exercise of self-control from the temptations of life, which tend to take people away from the path of piety and virtue, is the real purpose of this annual exercise. One is expected to maximize virtuous deeds during this month and precisely for this reason the mandatory responsibility of paying *Zakaat* by the rich to the poor and the needy is completed before the end of this month. The Qur'anic verses were first revealed to the Prophet (SAWS) during this month which markedly enhances its significance. We hope this monograph, besides guiding the Muslims to follow faithfully and correctly the prescribed rituals associated with *Saum*, will also motivate them to accomplish the spiritual benefits its observance entails.

We earnestly pray, in all humility, to Allah (SWT) to kindly accept our small services in the cause of Islam and Qur'an and graciously bless our efforts with success (*Aameen*).

وَأَخِيرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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# CHAPTER I

## GENERAL

### INTRODUCTION

Mankind is unique amongst all the creations in the world. It is bestowed with high degree of intellect and extra-ordinary freedom of thought and action, in additions to the same physical needs and instincts as any other living being. Animals act only instinctively to help themselves survive. Thinking is limited to fulfilling the needs of survival. Hence, in their world, it is survival of fittest. Human beings, on the other hand, use intellect to fulfil their needs and desires which are not restricted to survival alone. Desires, as distinct from wants, are unique to human beings. They spend great amount of time, energy and resources for fulfilling them. It is this quality that makes their life complicated but more purposeful. Clash of interest is unavoidable due to limitation of resources for fulfilment of unlimited desires. This is an obvious phenomenon that does not need explanation and further discussion. Thus the need of maintaining law and order, dispensation of justice and equitable distribution of resources becomes imperative to maintain social harmony and peace.

We know that all human beings are not equal or identical by birth. Dissimilarity is a constant factor with mankind. If this life were to be the beginning and end of



existence, then rule of 'might is right' should be the logical philosophy. In that case, poor, indigent, handicapped, gentle, truthful and honest will have nothing to look forward to. Therefore, from the very beginning of human civilisation, concept of 'might is right' has not been accepted, even though it is practised. Efforts have always been made to frame a code of conduct to ensure peace and harmony providing opportunities of prosperity and enjoyment of life. Disturbance, on the other hand deprives enjoyment of fruits of prosperity. It is in the interest of all to have a just and equitable social order to make life enjoyable.

Various theories have been formed and reformed over the ages. Common to all is the concept that the final and perfect justice will come only from the Omnipotent and Almighty Authority in the form of reward for good and punishment for the bad in the Hereafter - the life after the end of physical life. It stands to reason that only those would deserve the fair, final and perfect justice, who has adhered to the code of conduct honestly. Who should frame the code? Should it be universal, unbiased and permanent or favourable and restricted to a privileged few and temporary in nature? Man-made code can never be ideal, let alone universal, because human thinking will always be influenced by subjective factors. It will be conditioned by time, place and prevailing social environment. Their best effort will be limited to their restricted abilities.

Allah (SWT)<sup>1</sup> has taken upon Himself the responsibility of providing true guidance to His Master Creation, for He alone can devise a code which will be ideal and universal, providing justice and equity. This was done by commissioning numerous Messengers from amongst the people of different places, at different times, to guide the humanity to the true way of life. The Holy Qur'an is the culmination and perfection of that process of divine guidance, and the Holy Prophet (SAWS)<sup>2</sup>, the last of the Messengers. The Holy Qur'an contains fundamental principles that have remained constant, and method of their practical application in day to day of this life which was progressively improved and perfected over a period of time. They are aimed at enabling a person to identify what is prohibited and what is permitted solely for his own good:

*“Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures.”* (al-Furqan; 25:1)

Mark the word Criterion used for the Holy Qur'an. This Holy Book enables its follower to clearly judge between right and wrong. For this reason it has been described as Light in *Surah an-Noor*.

Man's life on this earth, as we all know, comes to an end on completion of its pre-determined term. However, the existence itself does not end. It is brought

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1. SWT stands for 'Sub'hanahu wa Ta'la' for meaning 'Pure and Exalted'.

2. SAWS stands for 'Sallallahu 'Alibi wa Salam' meaning 'May Allah's Blessings and Peace be upon him'.

back to life once again for dispensation of justice and award of prize or punishment, depending upon the performance during this life. So the main concern during this life should, logically, be the Day of Judgement when real justice will be done and final destination of eternal existence decided.

Place in Paradise is akin to a place for a jewel in a crown. A master jeweller does not pick up any jewel and fix it at any place in the crown. He selects each jewel with great care, discarding that is unfit and unworthy of a place in the crown. Of the selected ones, he decides upon the most appropriate place and position for each jewel, purely on its merit. Similarly, each one of us is subjected to tests and trials to ascertain our worth, quality and suitability for an appropriate place in the Paradise. The time and place of test is this life itself that is full of temptations and desires. An ordinary person has a weakness of falling prey to these temptations and desires without giving thought to their reality and repercussions. On the other hand, a well guided person will guard himself against falling to these temptations blindly. He will go for the good and banish the bad. This is the real success; not the material gains, name and fame achieved in this life. All symbols of well-being are worthless if principles are to be sacrificed and Divine Teachings disregarded for their sake. A simple study of the Holy Qur'an, which is easily available with translation in almost all leading languages of the world, reveals the real meaning and true purpose of this life.

It may be borne in mind that following the period of *Khulafa-ar Rashideen* (Rightly-guided rulers), certain

political differences cropped up which, unfortunately, divided the *Ummah* (community of Muslims) into two main blocks i.e., Sunnis and Shias. Subsequently, many schools of thought came into being on account of different opinions on minor details. These were the result of honest and sincere efforts of the later followers to be as close to the example set by the Holy Prophet (SAWS) as possible. These efforts reflect the love for the Holy Prophet (SAWS) and purity of desire on the part of Muslims to emulate his example. Perhaps, such a development was unavoidable in view of the rapid and vast expansion of the Islamic Society. The Sunni Muslims regards the following four major schools of *Fiqh*, named after their proponents as authentic:

- **HANAFI:** Propounded by the great *Imaam* No'man bin Thaabit, better known as Abu **Hanifa** or *Imaam-e A'zam*. It is followed by the majority of Muslims in the world.
- **SHAFI'EE:** Propounded by the great *Imaam* Muhammad bin Idris **Shafi**.
- **HANBALI:** Propounded by the great *Imaam* Ahmad bin **Hanbal**.
- **MALIKI:** Propounded by the great *Imaam* **Malik** Ibni Anas.

It is emphasised here that among these four Sunni schools, of *Fiqh*, there are no differences whatsoever in the basic tenets and commandments of Islam. The differences, wherever they occur, are minor and supplementary in

nature, which can be properly traced to the authentic Traditions (*Ahadith*) and practices of the Holy Prophet (SAWS). Thanks to these worthy souls, may blessings of Allah (SWT) be upon them all, because of their wide vision and accommodative approach, the magnitude of Islamic practices have come to be preserved in all their authenticity. It is beyond us to be really appreciating the true worth of their works. The contribution of these four *Imaams* in preserving, the purity of Islamic practices has been invaluable.

It is also proved that the spirit and purity of intention is more important and vital than mere ritualistic adherence. We must be ever grateful to them that by their hard work with utmost sincerity and honesty, they have left for our benefit a treasure of knowledge. Anyone can follow any of these schools of *Fiqh* to suit individual temperament and preference, without any fear of transgression or deviation, since the entire Sunni block considers them equally right and holds them in high esteem. However switching over from one to another for worldly considerations will certainly be transgression.

## **WORSHIP - A DIVINE DUTY**

Acts of worship are part of daily routine of mankind to remind it of the real goal in life. Islam lays great importance on observance of formal acts of worship. *Salaat* (Prayers), symbol of obedience and unity, is ordained five times a day for remembrance of Lord Almighty and assertion of mutual relationship between the worshipper and the worshipped. *Zakaat*, a unique system of social justice, is mandatory upon the wealthy,

inculcates compassion and sympathy for the poor, indigent, deprived and destitute. There are separate Monographs on these. *Hajj* (Pilgrimage to Makkah) mandated to be performed once in life time, participating in the grand gathering of Muslims from all parts of the world, paying homage at the House of Lord (*Baitullah*) as one body, discarding all discriminatory symbols, reviving the spirit of sacrifice of this world for the sake of the Hereafter displayed by the Holy Prophet Ibrahim (AS)<sup>3</sup> and his young son Isma'il (AS). *Saum* (Fasting) during the holy month of *Ramadhan* (eighth month of Lunar Calendar of Muslims) is an yearly exercise in self-restraint. It is a doubly blessed month as well for it was in this month that the Qur'an was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS):

*“Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you Who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting...”* (al-Baqarah; 2:185)

### TRUE SPIRIT OF SAUM

The aim of fasting is self-purification and obtaining self-control. The Holy Qur'an says:

*“O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint.”* (al-Baqarah; 2:183)

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3. AS stands for 'Alibis Salaam' meaning 'May Peace be upon him'.

Self-restraint is vital to our remaining on right course in life. This is the weapon with which a person can fight temptations. It holds the hands from committing excesses. In short, self-restraint keeps a person at a safe distance from sins. Explaining this further, the Holy Prophet (SAWS) said: "Whosoever observed *Saum* and did not refrain from lies and wicked deeds, Allah is not interested in his remaining hungry and thirsty." (Bukhari)

This aim can only be achieved if it is observed with due sincerity and solemnity, refraining from all prohibited and undesirable acts meticulously and consciously. Otherwise, the fasting will be reduced to remaining hungry, without fetching the intended benefits. Lord Almighty is not in need of fasts. The pious exercise is solely for the benefit of people.

## CHAPTER II

### VIRTUES & TYPES OF SAUM

#### VIRTUES OF SAUM

Apart from self-restraints, the virtues accruing from observing *Saum* with due sincerity are many. Some of the sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) recounting the virtues of observing *Saum* are given below:

*“Whosoever observed Saum of Ramadhan sincerely and conscientiously, Allah will forgive the sins committed before.”* (Bukhari)

“There is door to Paradise by the name *Rayyan*. Call will be given on the Day of Judgement, ‘Where are the observers of Saum?’ This door will be closed when the last of the observer of Saum would enter it.” (Bukhari & Muslim).

*“Whosoever observes Saum for Allah, his face is removed 70 kharif<sup>4</sup> from the Fire by Allah (SWT).”* (Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Nasaie, Ibni Majah and Ahmad).

*“Saum is a shield and if anyone of you did not speak shamelessly and create nuisance (during Saum); and if someone is bent on abusing and quarrelling, the person observing Saum must remain aware of state of Saum*

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4. *Kharif* is a measure of distance that is equal to 30 miles.



*(then how can he abuse and quarrel)."* (Bukhari & Muslim)

## TYPES OF SAUM

There are six types of *Saum*:

1. *Farz* (Mandatory).
2. *Wajib* (Obligatory).
3. *Sunnat* (Recommendatory).
4. *Nafl* (Voluntary).
5. *Makruh* (Undesirable).
6. *Haraam* (Prohibited).

### FARZ SAUM

*Saum* observed during the Holy month of *Ramadhan* fall in this category. As mentioned above, it is one of the four mandatory duties of Islam. Denial of this mandate results in loss of faith, necessitating its renewal, imperative to achieve status of a Muslim. Otherwise the person shall be treated as a non-Muslim. Deliberate omission to observe, without denying its mandate, is a major sin, necessitating atonement, which compensates only partially. The Holy Prophet (SAWS) said:

*"Anyone who omits one Saum of Ramadhan without valid reason or illness will not be able to compensate it even by observing Saum throughout his life."*  
(Tirmizi)

There are two kinds of *Farz Saum*:

1. **Fixed.** *Saum* observed during the month of *Ramadhan*.
2. **Not Fixed.** *Saum* which could not be observed in the month of *Ramadhan* due to prescribed reasons, viz., travelling, illness etc. are offered later but no firm dates are fixed. These are called *Qadha* (defaulted) *Saum*.

### **WAJIB SAUM**

*Wajib* (Obligatory) *Saum* are those which should be offered for specific purposes like penance (*Kaffarah*), thanks-giving (*Shukranah*) upon fulfilment of any desire, or simply for self-purification (*Tazakiyah*) and self-satisfaction (*Taskeen*). Having made the intention, it is sinful not to observe them due to negligence. These are of two types:

1. **Fixed.** *Saum* intended to be observed on a particular day becomes obligatory on that day. *Saum* also becomes *Wajib* (obligatory) on the first and the last day of *Ramadhan*, upon a person who has not personally sighted the moon of *Ramadhan* and *E'id-ul Fitr*, or has sighted the moon but his testimony of sighting the moon has not been accepted by appropriate authority.
2. **Not Fixed.** *Saum* which are intended to be observed, without fixing any specific date. Any *Saum* started but discontinued for valid reasons, become *Wajib* (Obligatory). These must be observed later at the earliest opportunity.

### **SUNNAT SAUM**

*Saum* observed in pursuance of the known practice of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) come under this category. He used to observe *Saum* on the following occasions:

- *Saum* of 'Ashoora, i.e., ninth and tenth day of the lunar month of *Muharram*.
- *Saum* of 'Arafa, i.e., ninth day of the lunar month of *Zil Hajj* when not performing the *Hajj* Pilgrimage.
- *Ayyam-al Baiz*, i.e., full moon days (13, 14 & 15) of every lunar month except *Ramadhan*.

### **NAFL SAUM**

*Saum* observed voluntarily come under this category. *Nafl Saum* which carry special rewards are as follows:

- *Saum* of *Sitt-e-Shawwal*, i.e., *Saum* observed on the six days following *E'id-ul Fitr*, either continuously from second to seventh of the lunar month of *Shawwal* (as per **Shafa'ee** School), or separately throughout this month (as per **Hanafi** and **Maliki** Schools). *E'id-ul Fitr* is celebrated on the 1st of this month hence *Saum* is not permitted on this day
- *Saum* during the lunar month of *Sha'ban*, which precedes the holy month of *Ramadhan*. Number or

days are not fixed. It is up to the individual to observe as many *Saum* as possible.

- *Saum* on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays of every week, except those during the holy month of *Ramadhan*.
- *Saum* on first 8 days of the lunar month of *Zil Hajj*, if not on *Hajj* Pilgrimage.
- *Saum* on Saturday, Sundays and Mondays of one month and Tuesdays and Thursdays of the next month.

#### **MAKRUH SAUM**

As the terms suggested, *Saum* should not be observed on the following occasions because they are not desirable:

- Only on 10<sup>th</sup> of the lunar month of *Muharram*.
- Only on Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays, except when any of these days fall on the day of *Nafl Saum* mentioned above.
- On doubtful days, *Saum* on 30<sup>th</sup> or Sha'ban if new moon is not sighted personally or 29<sup>th</sup> and it is not possible to verify the fact since its status whether it is *Saum* of *Ramadhan* or *Nafl* cannot be ascertained.

### **HARAAM SAUM**

Observing *Saum* on the following occasions is prohibited. It is sinful to observe *Saum* on the following days:

- On the day of *E'id-ul Fitr* and *E'id-ul Adh'ha*.
- On 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of lunar month of *Zil Hajj* (*Ayyam-e Tashreeq*).
- Observing *Saum* without eating *Sehri* or *Iftar* intentionally is also *Haraam* according to majority opinion. **Hanafi** School considers it as *Makruh*.
- *Saum* (other than *Farz*) observed without the permission of husband in the case of married women. According to **Hanafi** School this is *Makruh*.

## CHAPTER III

### SAUM OF RAMADHAN

#### GENERAL POINTS

Observing *Saum* during the whole month of *Ramadhan* is the third important article of Islam. It has been ordained specifically, including the period and the time, in the Holy Qur'an:

*“Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgement (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting. But if anyone is ill or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days late. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him. In that He has guided you; and so that you shall be grateful.”* (al-Baqarah; 2:185)

The most sacred and beneficent night of the lunar year, named *Lailat-ul Qadr*, falls in this month. The rewards accruing for virtuous deeds during this night are said to be far greater than similar virtuous deeds performed otherwise, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

*“Indeed we revealed it (Qur'an) in the Night of Power. And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand*

*months. Therein come down the angels and the Spirit (Angel Gabriel) by Allah's permission on every errand. Peace! This until the rise of dawn."* (al-Qadr; 97:1-5)

Explaining the special benefits of this pious duty, the Holy Prophet (SAWS) said:

*"There is almsgiving for everything, and the almsgiving for the body is fasting."* (Ibni Majah)

In short, rewards of observing *Saum* of the month of *Ramadhan* far greater than otherwise.

## **START & END OF MONTH OF RAMADHAN**

Like all lunar months, *Ramadhan* too starts with the sighting of new moon at dusk heralding the commencement of new month; and ends with the sighting of moon new moon of the next month i.e., *Shawwal*. It is, therefore, important that all adults Muslims keep proper track of the lunar months, more so, for those living in/travelling to the countries where Muslim presence is scarce and un-organised.

Lunar months comprise either 29 or 30 days. Therefore care must be taken to sight the new moon on 29<sup>th</sup> evening of the previous month, i.e., *Sha'ban*. The month of *Ramadhan* will commence if moon is sighted. Otherwise it will commence the day after completing 30 days for the month of *Sha'ban*. For testifying of one reliable Muslim adult is sufficient for commencement of the month. However, testifying of two such persons is necessary for ending the month after 29 days. In the event of horizon being cloudy, hazy or otherwise obscure due to

natural causes, 30 days will be completed and fasts terminated.

Sighting of moon is properly organised in cities and town by responsible people of the locality. Where no such arrangements exist, Muslims of the locality should organise it. If a Muslim is alone, sighting of moon by him is sufficient.

Sighting of moon anywhere in the country or countries (falling within a specified area)<sup>5</sup> is sufficient if learnt through reliable means of communication.

#### **APPLICABILITY OF MANDATE**

Mandate of *Saum* is applicable on all sane, adult and healthy Muslims who are not in state of travelling. Ladies should be free from menses. *Saum* of the holy month of *Ramadhan* that are missed due to certain specified reasons are treated as *Qadha*<sup>6</sup> and offered later at the earliest on permitted days, except during the month of *Ramadhan*, because during this month *Saum* are mandatory on all days.

*Saum* is not applicable to the following:

- **Children.** Though *Saum* is not applicable to children, but in order to practice and familiarise, those above seven years of age, should be

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5. Area on the surface of the Earth sun light, i.e., between the horizon where Sun is setting and the horizon where Sun is rising.

6. Any mandatory duty that is not performed during its specified time is called *Qadha* to be offered at the earliest afterwards.



persuaded to observe *Saum* and those above 10 years, may be compelled by force as per all School of *Fiqh* except **Maliki**, which does not agree on compulsion.

- **Mentally Retarded.**
- **Insanity/Unconsciousness.** In the case of temporary insanity during the holy month of *Ramadhan*, opinions of different Schools of *Fiqh* are as follows:

**Hanafi School** - Persons remaining under attack of insanity for the whole month are excused from *Saum* as well as *Qadha*. *Saum* missed due to attack(s) of insanity, not covering the whole month, should be treated as *Qadha*.

**Shafa'ee School** - Same as above with a rider that missed *Saum* should be treated as *Qadha* only if the bout of insanity was a result of a deliberate action by the person, otherwise, missed *Saum* is excused.

**Hanbali School** - There is no *Qadha* for *Saum* missed due to insanity regardless of reason provided is lasted for the whole day (day-break to sun-set). If the persons become sane, for whatever duration, the missed *Saum* will be treated as *Qadha*.

**Maliki School** - Same as **Hanbali** School with the modification that the *Saum* missed due to insanity will be treated as *Qadha* only if the person is in state of sanity for more than half the period of the *Saum*.

- **Old Age.** Old people who are not in a position to observe *Saum* during the holy month of *Ramadhan*, because of physical condition, are excused. However, they must compensate by offering *Fidyah*<sup>7</sup> for each missed *Saum* during the holy month of *Ramadhan* in the opinion of all Schools of *Fiqh*, except **Maliki** School, who consider it desirable instead of compulsory.
- **Pregnancy & Breast Feeding.** Pregnant women and breast feeding mothers are also excused from the *Saum* of *Ramadhan*, provided observing *Saum* is considered detrimental to the child or the mother or both according to medical opinion. Regarding treatment of missed *Saum*, opinions of different Schools of *Fiqh* are as follows:

**Hanafi School** - Missed *Saum* will be treated as *Qadha*, regardless of danger to child, mother or both. *Fidyah* is not necessary.

**Shafa'ee & Hanbali** Schools - Missed *Saum* will be treated as *Qadha* only if danger was to both or mother only. If danger was only to the child, then the missed *Saum* will be treated as *Qadha* and *Fidyah* will also be necessary for each missed *Saum*.

**Maliki School** - *Saum* missed by pregnant lady will be compensated by offering *Fidyah*. *Saum* missed

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7. Feeding a poor person for a day (minimum two meals) is called ***Fidyah*** in Islamic ***Fiqh***. Half *Sa'* (1110 grams) of wheat or its market value may also be donated to the poor.

by feeding mother will be treated as *Qadha* regardless of danger to mother, child or both

- **Illness.** A sick person is excused from *Saum* of *Ramadhan* provided there is a danger of aggravation of illness in the opinion of a competent medical authority (preferably a Muslim who is aware of the importance of *Saum*). Otherwise, *Saum* must be observed as *Qadha*. However *Fidyah* is allowed in the case of person remaining poor health constantly.
- **Journey.** It is up to the traveller to decide whether to observe *Saum* during journey or not. If a person does not observe *Saum* of *Ramadhan* due to inconvenience of journey, the missed *Saum* must be observed as *Qadha*. There is a minor difference of opinion on desirability of observing *Saum* of *Ramadhan* during journey. All except **Hanbali** School consider it desirable to observed, if one can. **Hanbali** School, however, considers it desirable to avail the convenience granted by Allah (SWT) with gratitude by not observing *Saum* of *Ramadhan*. If a person embarks on journey, after having made up intention to observe fast the previous night, it is incumbent upon him to complete the *Saum*. Details of distance and duration of journey and the opinion of different schools of *Fiqh* are as follows:

**Hanafi School:** Distance covered in three days on foot or camel which is taken as 54 miles (86.4 km).

**Others:** 48 Miles (76.8 km) or the distance which is covered in one day and night.

- **Menses and Post-natal discharge.** Ladies going through menses and post-natal discharge are excused from *Saum*. However, the *Saum* missed due to this reason will be offered as *Qadha* at the earliest.

**Notes:**

1. *Qadha Saum* of *Ramadhan*, if more than one, need not be observed continuously. They may be spaced as per convenience.
2. *Qadha Saum* of *Ramadhan* remains due till observed. If a person dies without observing them, his inheritors have to offer *Fidyah* on behalf of that person out of his/her estate. If, by chance, the inheritors fail to do so the *Qadha Saum* of *Ramadhan*, remain due for ever for which the person remain accountable. In view of this care must be taken that either *Qadha Saum* of *Ramadhan* are observed or *Fidyah* offered, as the case may be.
3. *Qadha Saum*, if not offered before the onset of next *Ramadhan*, should be offered after *Ramadhan* with specific *Niyyat* of *Qadha* of the month in which they were missed.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESCRIBED CONDITIONS & VIOLATIVE ACTS/OCCURENCES

#### PRESCRIBED CONDITIONS FOR SAUM

There are two conditions prescribed that need to be fulfilled for a valid *Saum*:

1. *Niyyat* (Intention).
2. Abstention from specified things during the entire period of *Saum*, i.e., from dawn to dusk (sun-set).

#### NIYYAT (INTENTION)

Deeds without intention are not recognised in Islam. Therefore, *Saum* must also be observed with due intention, otherwise, it will not serve the purpose and cannot be counted towards *Saum* of *Ramadhan*. Fresh intention for every day is essential. Intention to observe *Saum* for the whole month of *Ramadhan*, made on the first day, will not suffice. Following points must be kept in mind with regard to intention:

- Intention at heart is enough. Speech is not necessary. However, for those who wish to recite the intention it is:

“Nawaitu Un Usumu lillahi Ta'la Min Saum-al Ramadhan”

*(I intend observing Saum of Ramadhan).*

- It is not necessary to recite in Arabic language only. This can be stated in any known language.
- Eating of *Sehri* (pre-dawn meal) represents intention, because it is taken specifically for the purpose of *Saum*. If a person decides not to observe *Saum* after eating the *Sehri*, but continues with it, will not fulfil the condition of intention and his *Saum* will become invalid. However, in the following cases intention should be specific:
  - (a) If the time of taking usual morning meals coincides with the time of *Sehri*
  - (b) If, for whatever reasons, *Sehri* has not been taken.
  - (c) In the case of people who habitually partake in *Sehri* but do not observe *Saum*.
- Time by which a person should make up his/her intention to observe *Saum* is as follows:

**Hanafi School.** Time by which intention should be made up is dependent on the type of *Saum*:

**(a) Till Mid-day<sup>8</sup>** (Provided other conditions of *Saum* were not violated by then) for the following types of *Saum*:

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8. Mid-day in *Sahri'yah* is arrived at by adding half of the day time to the hour of day break which in tropical zone is approximately one hour and 20 minutes **before** sun-rise. For example day break is at 4.30 AM and sun set is at 6.30 PM. Duration of fasting time is 14 hours. In this case, mid-day will be  $4.30 + 7.00 = 11.30$  AM.

- (i) *Saum* of *Ramadhan*.
- (ii) *Wajib Saum*.
- (iii) Voluntary (*Nafl*) *Saum*.

**(b) By Dawn.**

- (i) *Qadha* of *Saum* of *Ramadhan*.
- (ii) *Wajib Saum* (Not fixed).
- (iii) *Qadha* of Voluntary (*Nafl*) *Saum*.

According to **Shafa'ee**, **Hanbali** and **Maliki** Schools decision must be taken before dawn in all cases.

- Intention should not be conditional<sup>9</sup>. It should be simple and specific, without 'ifs' and 'buts'.
- Intention to observe other types of *Saum* during the holy month of *Ramadhan* does not make any difference. The *Saum* will be counted towards *Ramadhan* only, since other types of *Saum* are not permitted during this holy month.

**ABSTENTIONS**

These are three types of abstentions are prescribed during the period of *Saum*:

- Drinking any substance.
- Eating any substance.
- Sexual intercourse.

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9. For example it should not decide: "I shall observed *Saum* if I get excused of so and so work (or any such condition)." Or "I shall observe *Saum* but will discontinue if I have do so and so work."

## VIOLATIONS

Conscious violation of any of the prescribed abstentions invalidates the *Saum*. Violations committed unconsciously, have no effect. There are two types of violations:

- Violations resulting in *Qadha* (Defaulted) *Saum*.
- Violations resulting in Kaffarah (Penance) *Saum*.

### VIOLATIONS RESULTING IN *QADHA* (DEFAULTED) *SAUM*.

The following acts invalidate the *Saum* that has to be offered as *Qadha*, as soon as possible, after the holy month of *Ramadhan*:

- *Saum* observing **WITHOUT** intention or intention made **AFTER** mid-day or for the whole duration.
- Deciding to end *Saum* **AFTER** having made up intention. However, according to **Hanafi** School, if a person reverses his decision of ending *Saum* **BEFORE** mid-day, *Saum* continues **PROVIDED** no act was committed in violation of abstention by that time.
- Ending the *Saum* after violating one of more abstentions **UNCONSCIOUSLY**, under the wrong impression that the *Saum* is already invalidated.
- Not observing *Saum* of *Ramadhan* having missed the *Sehri* (pre-dawn meal) due to any reason.
- Taking *Sehri* after specified time under the wrong impression that time of *Sehri* is still available, but



came to know later that the time had already passed.

- Ending the *Saum* before sun-set under the wrong impression that sun has set, but realising later that sun had not set.
- Discontinuing abstentions after wet dream under the wrong impression that the *Saum* has lost validity.
- Swallowing water **UNCONSCIOUSLY** while gargling or swimming.
- Taking snuff, smelling vaporous substances etc.
- Pouring medicine or oil in nose and/or ear such that it reaches the throat.
- If the medicine applied on deep wounds of stomach or head reaches inside.
- Swallowing non-eatables like grass, paper, stone, cotton etc.
- Swallowing of particles stuck in between teeth if quantity is equal to or more than a size of Bengal Gram (*Chana*) even without taking it out of mouth. If the substance is of lesser quantity but was **taken out of mouth and then swallowed**.
- Swallowing so much of sweat or tears that the salty taste is felt in the entire mouth.
- Swallowing saliva which is colour dominant due to taking of coloured threads in mouth for professional reasons, i.e., tailoring, embroidery.
- Swallowing back (mouthful) of spontaneous vomit.

- Vomiting INTENTIONALLY. Uncontrollable omit does not invalidate *Saum* unless swallowed back.
- Violation of any of the abstentions by force by from others.
- Sleeping with *paan* or any such thing after taking of *Sehri* till after the day-break.
- INTENTIONALLY inhaling/smelling smoke of perfumes like *Oud, Umber, incense* etc.
- Swallowing blood coming out of gums whose taste is felt in the throat.
- If valid reasons for ending *Saum* had occurred, i.e., illness, menses and emergencies like accidents, fire drowning etc. Journey is not included because it does 'occur' but is undertaken intentionally, unless circumstances are extremely compelling and continuation of *Saum* is not possible during journey.

#### **VIOLATIONS RESULTING IN KAFFARA (PENANCE)**

Keeping in view the sanctity of the mandate, and its application just once a year, it is expected of the person observing *Saum* will remain conscious of it and refrain from any act of commission or omission which may render the *Saum* invalid. WILFUL violation of a mandatory *Saum* is a major sin entailing *Kaffarah* (penance) as well as *Qadha*. Given below are the acts that fall under this category:

- Sexual intercourse<sup>10</sup>, with opposite or same sex. Ladies forced into the act are excused penance, but *Qadha* will be applicable.
- Eating, swallowing or drinking anything. According to **Shafa'ee** and **Hanbali** Schools *Kaffarah* is not necessary, only *Qadha* will be applicable.
- Eating, swallowing or drinking anything under the impression that the *Saum* has already been invalidated because of certain acts<sup>11</sup> which **DO NOT** actually invalidate it.

**NOTE:** If a person has intentionally broken more than one *Saum* during the holy month of *Ramadhan*, *Qadha* of all the invalidated *Saum* is mandatory but *Kaffarah* is only once.

**Method of Performing *Kaffara*:** To err is human, but not to accept it and not to feel repentant is devilish. Accepting sin, repenting, making a determined effort not to commit it again and seeking forgiveness from Allah (SWT) is a virtue that is appreciated by Him. *Kaffarah* is an act of penance to nullify the effect of major sins. It is performed by one of the following acts in the given order of priority:

- Freeing a slave (or bonded labour).

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10. Mere insertion of front part of male organ (head), whether from front or rear, falls under the definition of sexual intercourse. Ejaculation is not necessary. There is not bar on sexual intercourse during night (between *Iftar* and *Sehri*) except while in *E'tekaf*.

11. Using hair oil, embracing and/or kissing a women, removal of blood clots and applying *Surma* in eyes are permitted.

- Observing *Saum* continuously for 60 days<sup>12</sup>.
- Feeding 60 poor people twice for one day or one poor person twice a day for 60 days.

In the following cases the mandate of *Kaffarah* (penance) is NOT applicable, though *Qadha Saum* will have to be observed by adults.

- If the offending person is insane or minor, since *Saum* is not mandatory for them.
- If the invalidated *Saum* was other than mandatory *Saum* of *Ramadhan*.
- If intention of observing was not made clearly before day-break and abstentions were not observed, because the *Saum* is not effective without clear intention.
- If *Saum* was invalidated due to menses, illness and other valid reasons.
- If a lady is forced into sexual intercourse.
- If an act of doubtful nature was committed unconsciously leading to intentional acts of invalidation subsequently under the wrong impression that *Saum* is invalidated.

### EXCUSABLE VIOLATIONS

In His abounding mercy, Allah (SWT) has forgiven the following acts which do not affect validity of *Saum*:

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12. Since these *Saum* have to be observed without break, care must be taken to ensure the holy month of *Ramadhan* and '*Eidain* (prohibited for *Saum*) do not fall in between. Ladies are permitted to discontinue *Saum* during their periods of menses and complete the total soon after.

- Violating any of the abstentions UNCONSCIOUSLY<sup>13</sup>.
- Swallowing anything involuntarily, e.g., smoke, dust or insect.
- Vomiting spontaneously.
- Wet dreams.
- Slight bleeding of teeth such that its quantity is not dominant over mouth swab.
- Taking injections for treatment of minor illness, if not advisable to delay. Taking intravenous injections for gaining strength is not permissible.

#### **MAKRUH (UN-DESIRABLE ACTS)**

These are the acts which are undesirable during *Saum*, at the same time these do not invalidate it. Hence neither penance is required nor the *Saum* becomes *Qadha*, but the reward is reduced. These are as follows:

- To check the taste anything. Wives and servants of stiff necked husbands and masters are excused, if they check the taste while cooking food or purchasing eatables from market.
- To chew or keep something in the mouth. Women, whose children are used to eating food softened by chewing, are allowed to do so if they are hungry and no one else available to chew.
- To kiss lips or join naked bodies, un-mindful of possibility of ejaculation.

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13. It is duty of colleagues to remind the person of the *Saum* to prevent him from violating the abstentions unconsciously.

- To undertake hard work that is likely to cause exhaustion or fatigue, that continuation of *Saum* may become difficult.
- To unconsciously hold water in nose or mouth while performing *Wudhu*.
- To un-necessary collect saliva (spit) in the mouth.
- To openly display restlessness or fatigue.
- To delay a *Ghusl* without valid reason, if it has become due for specified reasons.
- To clean teeth with toothpowder, toothpaste or by chewing charcoal etc.
- To intentionally inhale smoke vapour or dust.
- To over-delay *Sehri*, un-mindful of time.
- To hasten in *Iftar* un-mindful of time.
- To backbite, tell lie, abuse, quarrel, create noise and nuisance or commit excess.

#### **ACTS WHICH ARE NOT MAKRUH**

These acts, though permissible, are commonly understood to be *Makruh* but not so in reality.

- To use *Surma*, *Kajal*, Hair oil, *Miswak*/Tooth Brush<sup>14</sup> and smell perfume.
- To embrace and kiss spouse, PROVIDED there is no fear of ejaculation or sexual intercourse by losing self-control by one or both.

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<sup>14</sup> Tooth Paste, Tooth Power or any other substance should not be applied while brushing.

- To put medicine in eyes.
- To swallow saliva without accumulating it.
- To swallow small bits of food stuck between teeth PROVIDED its quantity does not exceed that of a Bengal Gram (*chana*).
- To remove blood clots in any part of the body or donate the blood in emergency.
- To delay *Ghusl* that has become due because of sexual intercourse with spouse or wet dreams during night, until morning.
- To ejaculate while seeing or handling sex parts of animals.
- To bathe, wash, or put wet cloth on head or body to reduce the effect severe heat.

### **SUHOOR/SEHRI (PRE-DAWN MEAL)**

Meals taken at specified time before dawn are called *Suhoor/Sehri*. Normal food may be taken for *Sehri*. It should not be avoided due to laziness or vanity. The Holy Prophet (SAWS) said: “Eat *Sehri*, because there is sanctity in eating *Sehri*.” (Bukhari & Muslim) It is not desirable to default *Saum* if *Sehri* could not be taken due to rising late or uncertainty about availability of time. If *Sehri* was taken under wrong impression that time is still available when actually it was over, a symbolic *Saum* should still be observed and its *Qadha* observed later. *Sehri* should not be taken if there is strong suspicion about time. To take *Sehri* wilfully under doubt is sinful.

*Sehri* should not be avoided due to laziness or vanity. The Holy Prophet (SAWS) said: ***“Eat Sehri, because there is sanctity in eating Sehri.”*** (Bukhari & Muslim)

### **IFTAR (TERMINATION OF FAST)**

*Saum* is terminated soon after sun set. Delay is not desirable. Use of dates, fresh or dry, is desirable, if available. Otherwise anything which is readily available is good enough. Even water will do. Before taking anything the following short *Du'a* (supplication) must be recited quietly:

***“Allahumma laka sumtu wa ‘ala rizqika aftartu”.***

***(O our Lord I observed Saum for you and terminate it with your provision).***

After *Iftar* the following *Du'a* must be recited quietly:

***“Zahab-az zama’u wab tallatil uruqu wa thabatal ajru insha Allah.”***

***(Gone is the thirst, stomach got satiated and God Willing, reward will also be given).***

Restraint should be exercised while taking *Iftar*. Unseemly haste and excess is unbecoming. *Iftar* should neither be delayed nor prolonged, disregarding time of *Salaat-ul Maghrib*, which should be offered in congregation in nearby *Masjid*. This *Salaat* is offered immediately after sun set.

Regular meals may be taken after *Salaat-ul Maghrib* and get ready for *Salaat-ul Isha* and *Salaat-ut Tarawiyah*. Details of *Salaat-ut Tarawiyah* are given in Monograph 3



**'Salaat - symbol of Obedience to Allah (SWT) Discipline, Unity and Equality in Islam.'** Any tendency to hang on to meals, continue eating intermittently and take rich and excessive meals, under the impression that it is necessary to maintain health or prevent weakness, should be curbed. It is against the ethics and spirit of *Saum*.

## CHAPTER V

### ETIQUETTES & E'TEKAF

#### ETIQUETTE OF HOLY MONTH OF RAMADHAN

The holy month of *Ramadhan* is to be respected by all Muslims. Those who are not observing *Saum* due to valid reasons should refrain from eating or drinking in public. Even those Muslims who's *Saum* has been invalidated for any reason, should observe abstentions till sun-set. Similarly, a person who has just converted to Islam, an insane person who has just regained to sanity, an unconscious person who has just become conscious, a traveller (not observing *Saum*) who has just returned home, a minor who has just become adult, a women whose menses have just ceased, should all observe abstentions till sun-set like those observing *Saum*.

#### REFRAINING FROM EVILS

Muslims are expected to refrain from foul language, lies, back-biting and idle talk. It must be doubly ensured that these are not committed during this holy month of *Saum*, particularly by those who are observing it. The Holy Prophet (SAWS) said:

*“Anyone (even while observing Saum) if does not refrain from telling lies and acting upon them, then Allah has no need of his abstaining from eating and drinking.”* (Bukhari, Abu Dawood, Tirmizi, Nasaie and Ibni Majah)

## CHARITY AND RECITING QUR'AN

The holy month of *Ramadhan* has the uniqueness of fetching manifold rewards for virtuous deeds than in normal times. The Holy Prophet (SAWS) used to be extra charitable during *Ramadhan*. He used to recite the Holy Qur'an excessively in this month.

## SPECIALITIES OF THE LAST DAYS OF RAMADHAN

Though the entire month of Ramadhan is special, yet the last ten days have extra significance. According to the tradition quoted from A'isha (RA), the Holy Prophet (SAWS) used to remain awake and exhort family members also to remain awake performing *Salaat* and reciting the Holy Qur'an. According to the tradition quoted by Muslim, the Holy Prophet (SAWS) used to be busy in worship of Allah (SWT) during the last ten days of the Holy month of Ramadhan as never before.

### ***E'TEKAF (Retreat in Masjid)***

*E'tekaf* literally means to resolve to abide by something by self-imposed restrictions. Intention may be good or bad. In the context of Islamic *Shari'yah*, it may be defined as self-imposed isolation by confining oneself in a *Masjid* with a view to concentrating on worship, study of the Holy Qur'an, meditation, seeking forgiveness and recitations praise, of purity and exaltations of Allah (SWT).

It can be as short as a few minutes or for several days, depending upon individual choice.

### **PURPOSE OF E'TEKAF**

The aim of *E'tekaf* is to maximise and consolidate the benefits of the holy month of *Ramadhan*. The time chosen for this special exercise is noteworthy. Spiritual training requires physical conditioning. Twenty days would have passed abstaining from food, water and sex during. Special *Salaat (Tarawiyah)* would have been attended daily after *Isha'*. The mind and body would have got tuned, to embark on higher achievements in strengthening faith and improving knowledge during the last ten days in total isolation, undisturbed and without usual distractions. Normal work schedule goes on even while observing Saum. *E'tekaf* provides an opportunity to have a clean break and concentrate on higher aims.

### **TIME AND DURATION OF E'TEKAF**

There is no specific time for this. However, it was the regular practice of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) to observe it during the last ten days of the holy month of *Ramadhan*, as recorded by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood and Nasaie quoting Abu Huraira. The obvious reasons for observing during last ten days have been mentioned above. There is no restriction on observing it for the whole month of *Ramadhan* or any convenient number of days.

Duration of day is counted from sun set to sun set of next day according to Islamic way. If a person intends to

observe *E'tekaf* during the last ten days of *Ramadhan*, he/she must commence it from sunset of 20<sup>th</sup> day and cease after sunset of 30<sup>th</sup> day (or 29<sup>th</sup> day if moon is sighted). Any number of days can be opted for *E'tekaf* commencing from previous sun set.

### PRECONDITIONS

- \* *Niyyat* (Intention). This is a precondition for acceptance of any act or deed in Islamic *Shari'yah*.
- \* *Masjid*. Except **Hanafi** School, all consider *Masjid* as the only place for *E'tekaf*. They interpret the following *Ayat* of the Holy Qur'an in support:

*"...but do not associate with your wives while you are in retreat in Mosques..."* (al-Baqarah; 2:187)

According to **Hanafi** School women should observe *E'tekaf* in their homes only which is their regular and proper place for *Salaat*. If there is no specific place for *Salaat* they may select a suitable place for the purpose.

Again according to all except **Hanafi** School, *E'tekaf* may be observed in any *Masjid*. According to **Hanafi** School, only those *Masajid* are suitable for *E'tekaf* where regular *Salaat* are held.

- \* *Saum*. According to majority opinion *E'tekaf* cannot be observed without *Saum*.

### DOS AND DON'TS DURING E'TEKAF

Keeping in mind the purpose of *E'tekaf*, it is desirable to keep oneself busy in the following ways:

- Deep study of the holy Qur'an, *Sunnah* and other authentic religious literature.
- Teach, preach and write on religious.
- Recite proclamation of praise, purity and exaltation of Allah (SWT).
- Recite *Durood*. It is the same *Durood* which is recited in *Salaat*.

The following actions, though permitted in *Saum*, are not desirable during *E'tekaf*:

- To enjoy sex in any manner.
- To indulge in trade and commerce or other usual professional activities.
- To go out of *Masjid* or place of *E'tekaf* (for ladies) without any valid reason.
- To keep quiet without doing any of the above mentioned desirable acts.

### PERMITTED ACTS DURING E'TEKAF

The following acts are permitted:

- To make arrangements like occupying a separate place and isolating it by hanging sheets of cloth etc.

- To visit home for natural calls, bathing etc., if suitable arrangements are not available in the *Masjid*.
- To visit home for taking food if there is no one to fetch it for him.
- To visit another *Masjid* for offering *Salaat-ul Jumu'a* if it is not held in the *Masjid* where he is observing *E'tekaf*.
- To help extinguish fire, save a drowning person and attend to such emergencies, though these actions will break *E'tekaf*.
- To attend *Salaat-ul Janaza* and go with it.
- To take rest, sleep or offer medical or religious opinion.

#### ***E'TEKAF OF LADIES***

As mentioned earlier, place for *E'tekaf* is home for the ladies. Married women should take prior permission of their husbands. According to all, except **Hanafi** School, husband can withdraw his permission. **Hanafi** School is, however, of the opinion that it is sinful for the husband to withdraw permission.

Ladies cannot observe *E'tekaf* during the period of menses, but can do so during the period of *Istehaza* (continuation of menses beyond normal period or bleeding due to illness).

### **QADHA OF EITEKAF**

There is difference of opinion about *Qadha* of a discontinued *E'tekaf*:

- **Hanafi** and **Maliki** Schools - It is obligatory to observe *Qadha* of an *E'tekaf* discontinued due to any reason.
- **Shafa'ee** and **Hanbali** Schools - It is not obligatory.



## CONCLUSION

Fasting has remained as one of the modes of worship since the very beginning of religious teachings. It is practised in one form or the other even now in almost all religions of the world. Islam, being the source of all religions, has not only retained it as one of the modes of worship, but also, as in all other modes, has made it an important collective function by fixing its method, duration and time, thus creating a divine environment.

Muslims observe *Saum* with fervour and devotion. However, there is a tendency to convert it into a social event of gaiety and festivity, the right occasion for which is *Eid-ul Fitr*. Excessive expenditure on food, decoration of *Masajid* and shopping is also being practised by growing number of people which is akin to festivals of non-Muslims. It mars the solemnity and dignity of the occasion and kills the very purpose of self-restraint, self-introspection and self-education. These distortions are mostly due to lack of true knowledge. A serious and continuous learning of the Holy Qur'an and *Sunnah* helps in understanding the true purport of the this long annual exercise.