

**{The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'ân, 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 (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe *Saum* (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe *Saum* (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must glorify Allâh [i.e. to say *Takbîr* (*Allâhu Akbar*; Allâh is the Most Great] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.}(TMQ, 2:185)**

The period of fasting is the month of Ramadan. Allah (SWT) knows all the situations that may arise and He has made rules for them. Some superficial sophists like to make the pretexts, that enable them to transgress the *shariah*, fair-seeming. In their false arguments they quote the verse, "**Allah does not charge a self (anything) except its capacity**" (2: 286). We reply saying that these people define the capacity according to their wishes. Nevertheless, Allah (SWT)<sup>1</sup> is the Creator and He knows that people can carry out what they are charged with. Whereas, when it is not in the capacity of a person to carry out the ordainments He (SWT) grants him license.

Observe the mercy of Allah when He says, "**and whoever is sick or on a journey, then a (fixed) number of other days.**" Ailment is something that you and a clever doctor determine. A doctor is the one who should tell you that if you fast your health will deteriorate. Hence, a ransom of feeding an indigent is required in this case. Also, Allah (SWT) gives you license not to fast when you are on a journey. Traveling entails instability and unsettledness. It could be that it is not the first time for you to travel to a specific place, but the circumstances differ from one journey to another. This license is still given despite the fact that traveling at present is much easier than it was in the past.

In the past, traveling was more arduous. However, in comparison between the past and the present , we find that getting settled today is more difficult. Some people contend this license now to invalidate it. Nevertheless, they should know that Allah's legislation of a license renders it a *shariah* law that is needed.

Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah:

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1 Subhanahu wa ta'ala (glorified and sublime be He)

Allah's Apostle was on a journey and saw a crowd of people, and a man was being shaded (by them). He asked, "What is the matter?" They said, "He (the man) is fasting." The Prophet said, "It is not righteousness that you fast on a journey." 2

The Qur'an states, "**and whoever is sick or on a journey, then a (fixed) number of other days**" Namely, that merely being on a journey necessitates breaking one's fast and one is to compensate for this day by fasting on another, after the lapse of Ramadan. This indicates that Allah does not accept your fast on such a day. It is true that He did not order you explicitly saying, "Break your fast" but you are not to legislate for yourself!

The Prophet (SAWS)<sup>3</sup> did not allow us to fast on the day of *Eid al-Fitr* (The festival of Fitr). This day is called so because with its advent the Muslims rejoice that they have been able to accomplish their fasting of Ramadan. Thus, fasting on this day is not permitted. Yet, it is allowed on the second day. The Prophet (SAWS) was narrated to have prohibited the fasting on *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-ADha*.

Someone might think that fasting in Ramadan differs from fasting in any other month as it is the month when the Qur'an was revealed. Fasting itself is honored to be in the month of the Qur'an revelation. Moreover, He (SWT) Who sent down the Quran and enjoined fasting in Ramadan, is the One Who granted license for the ill or the traveler to fast on days other than Ramadan. He (SWT) is Able to endow other days with the same pure attributes of Ramadan days. Allah (SWT) wants to render the blessing of Ramadan days disseminative year long. In addition, we fast Ramadan in summer, and fast it in winter, autumn and spring. Thus, it comes in different seasons.

In the verse in hand, Allah says, "**And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a *Miskîn* (poor person) (for every day)**" (2:184) This verse indicates that fasting was enjoined gradually in stages similar to the issue of inheritance (refer to verse no.180 ). Many ordainments in *shariah* were introduced gradually. Examples of this are, the laws of intoxicants, inheritance and gambling. Firstly, fasting was optional then it developed to be obligatory after the Muslims got used to it. Then, came the ordainment, "**So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe *Saum* (fasts) that month**" Now, it has become obligatory to those who are neither ill nor on a journey, as the traveler is allowed to fast in other days. As to the ill ,who is advised by the doctor not to fast, he can pay a ransom as mentioned above.

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2 Saheeh al-Bukhary, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 167:

3 Salla Allah alayhe wa salam (Allah's blessings and peace be upon him)

When fasting was voluntary, a Muslim was allowed to fast and feed a *maskeen* (indigent) or two. The more charity the person gives, the more Allah gives him without measure. However, Allah (SWT) advised the Muslims saying, "**And that you fast is better for you if only you know**". Then when fasting became obligatory the order came as follows, "**So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe *Saum* (fasts) that month**"

What I think is more preponderant is that Allah (SWT) has at first enjoined the fasting of three days: The tenth, twentieth and the thirtieth of each month. These were the "**fixed number of days**" referred to in verse 184. Then, He (SWT) prescribed fasting in the month of Ramadan and it has become mandatory as a pillar of Islam. Then, the exception of the ill and the traveler was given. The scholars, who believe that the ill or the traveler on a journey has the option of fasting or not fasting, should adopt the explicit interpretation of the Qur'anic text. The verse stated, "**and whoever is sick or on a journey**" and broke his fast "**then a (fixed) number of other days**." Thus, the verse is explicit and does not have inherent interpretations. Yet, what is meant by the '**ill**' is he who is extremely or chronically ill and the one '**on a journey**' is he who is exhausted by the journey.

**'So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe *Saum*** ' The '**month**' is marked by the crescent appearance. Whereas, the sun does not indicate the beginning of the month. It only indicates the start and the end of the day. We need both the moon and the sun to determine the time. Allah (SWT) links the servants' deeds of worship to clear signs in the cosmos such as the crescent. And the sun is for knowing days. Thus the sighted crescent, at the time of sunset, announces the advent of the first night of Ramadan.

The appellation of 'Ramadan' was most probably done at a time of hot weather. The Arabic original meaning of this word is derived from the word 'Ramda', i.e. hot weather and it also denotes thirst. However, Ramadan came in seasons of cold and moderate weather, as well. Allah (SWT) has inspired the people to call the months with their names as such. This is indicative of the hardship that the fasting person might experience during the month.

Ramadan is given a high status as it is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed. The Qur'an is a methodology of guiding values, on the other hand, fasting is a discipline to the soul. Thus, the status of the noble month is that it disciplines both the body and soul. The Qur'an descended from the preserved tablet then was revealed to mankind to start their mission.

Some people wonder how the whole Qur'an descended in Ramadan while it is known that it was revealed to Muhammad gradually in stages. It actually descended from the Supreme knowledge to start its mission in the universe. Then it was gradually revealed in parts sent down in accordance with the need for them in situations taking place at the time. The purpose of this is to make the rules and ordainments of the Qur'an get well settled in the minds of the companions. Conversely, if the Qur'an was revealed all at once, then the companions could possibly have the rule yet unable to locate it to benefit from. However, when the ordainment comes at a time of need for it, then it gets well settled in the mind.

To strike an example, for Allah is the best example, if you have a first aid pharmacy at home then you put in it all the sorts of medicines that you think you're going to need. You could just as well have the medicine in your cabinet yet you do not need it. However, when you are actually in need of the medicine then you go to the pharmacy to get it without any doubt or confusion. So does Allah (SWT) when he wants a rule to treat an issue, He (SWT) does not wait until it descends from the preserved tablet; rather the rule is in the lower heaven and Jibril (Gabriel) (AS)<sup>4</sup> reveals it at its befitting time during Muhammad's prophecy or at the time which Allah intends for it to resolve an issue. Allah says in the Qur'an what can be translated as,

**"And with the Truth We have sent it down, and with the Truth it has come down" (17:105).**

**"The trustworthy Spirit has come down with it" (26:193).**

The polytheists wondered why the Qur'an was not revealed all at once. Regard the glorious reply in the chapter of al-Furqan, "[And those who disbelieve say: "Why is not the Qur'ân revealed to him all at once?" Thus \(it is sent down in parts\), that We may strengthen your heart sight thereby. And We have revealed it to you gradually, in stages. \(It was revealed to the Prophet in 23 years.\).](#)"

**"And they do not come up to you with any similitude, except that We come to you with the Truth and a fairer explanation." (25: 32-33)**

Moreover, the disbelievers had their own objections and needed replies. Had the Qur'an been revealed all at once, this particular issue would have been wasted. In addition, the believers inquired about many matters and the Qur'an replied to their questions. This is another requirement that needed the revelation of the Qur'an to be gradual and in stages.

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4 Alayhe as-salam (peace be upon him)

