



Clarifying the Beginning of the Fasting Day & Its End

From: Sittings In The Month Of Ramaḍān & A Gift To The People Of Iman In Lessons For The Month Of Ramaḍān

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists. He has demarcated for His slaves appointed times and places in which good deeds are to be performed. He has clarified them to His slaves with the most complete of clarifications. May prayers and peace be upon our Prophet Muḥammad, his family, his Companions, and those who cling to his Sunnah and are guided by his guidance.

To proceed: Allāh the Exalted has said:

﴿أَجَلَ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ ۚ هُنَّ لِيَابِسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِيَابِسٌ هُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۗ فَالآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَبْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ۗ ثُمَّ أَتَمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ﴾

It is made lawful for you to have sexual relations with your wives on the night of as-sawm. They are *libās* (a body covering) for you and you are the same for them. Allāh knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He turned to you and forgave you. So now, have sexual relations with them and seek that which Allāh has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread (light) appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your fast until nightfall. [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

Allāh the Glorified has demarcated in this noble verse, with clear limits that everyone knows, the beginning of the fasting day and its end. So the point of its beginning is the appearance of the second Fajr and the point of its end is the setting of the sun; just as He demarcated the beginning of the month's fast with a clear limit that everyone knows, and it is with the sighting of the hilāl or the completion of the number of days in Sha'bān as 30 days.

Thus, our religion is the religion of ease and lenience.

﴿وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ﴾

He has not placed upon you any hardship in religion. [Sūrah al-Hajj 22:78]

So for Allāh is all praise and thanks. And this is a lightening from Allāh upon His slaves from the long fasting periods of the past.

Al-Bukhāri narrated on the authority of Barā' that he said: "When the Companions of Muḥammad fasted and it became time to break the fast, if a man slept before eating, then he would not eat that night nor the next day until evening. Once, Qays bin Sirmah al-Ansāri was fasting, so when it was time to break the fast he came to his wife and said to her, 'Do you have any food?' She said, 'No, but I will go and seek some for you.' He used to work during the day, so sleep overtook him; then his wife came, and when she saw him she said, 'You have missed it.' Then in the middle of the next day, he fainted, and that was mentioned to the Prophet ﷺ, so this verse was sent down:

﴿أَجَلَ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ﴾

"It is made lawful for you to have sexual relations with your wives on the night of as-sawm' [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

"So they were overjoyed, and it was also revealed:

﴿وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ﴾



“And eat and drink until the white thread (light) appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night).”

[Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]¹

Also in al-Bukhāri [it’s narrated] on the authority of Barā’ that he said, “When the fast of Ramaḍān was revealed, they would not approach their wives for the entirety of Ramaḍān. The men used to deceive themselves, so Allāh the Exalted revealed:

﴿عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ﴾

“Allāh knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He turned to you and forgave you.”² [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

It is said, “He was treacherous” and “He was duped,” with the meaning: You have deceived yourselves by sexual intercourse during the nights of the fasts. “So Allāh turned to you,” meaning, before your *tawbah* from what occurred. “And He has forgiven you”— so He has not seized you, and He has been lenient with you and easy towards you.

So He has allowed for you women, food, and drink from the setting of the sun until the appearance of the second Fajr. With that, the fasting person begins refraining from these things and others that are not permissible for the fasting person until the setting of the sun, due to His statement:

﴿ثُمَّ أَمَّا الصَّيَامُ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ﴾

Then complete the fast until the night. [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

And the word (until) means “extent” when that which follows it is not from the same category as what was before it, for it does not enter into it (its meaning). The night is not from the category of the day, so the fast ends with the beginning of the night at the setting of the sun, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا أَقْبَلَ اللَّيْلُ مِنْ هَا هُنَا، وَأَدْبَرَ النَّهَارُ مِنْ هَا هُنَا، وَعَرَبَتِ الشَّمْسُ، فَقَدْ أَفْطَرَ الصَّائِمُ

When the night approaches from here and the day passes away from here and the sun sets, then the fasting person breaks his fast.³

Some of the people differ from the legislative intent regarding the *suḥūr* and the *ifṭār*, so that a group from the people or most of them stay awake at night. So when it is the last part of the night and they want to sleep, they eat the *suḥūr* before Fajr, then they sleep and abandon the Fajr prayer in its time with the *jamā’ah*, thereby committing a number of errors:

- ❖ They fast before the time for the fast.
- ❖ They abandon Fajr prayer with the *jamā’ah*.
- ❖ They delay the prayer from its time so that they do not pray it except after they wake up, even if it is at the time for *Zuhr*.

And the innovators delay the breaking of the fast past the setting of the sun and they do not break the fast except with the appearance of the stars. And the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ and the most evil affairs are the newly invented matters, and every innovation is a deviation. We ask Allāh to grant us steadfastness upon the Sunnah and avoidance of innovation and its people, and may Allāh bestow prayers upon Muḥammad.

¹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri 1915

² Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri 4508

³ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri 1954