

Fasting During Daylight Hours In The Holy Month Of Ramadan

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The Qur'anic ruling:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (٢:١٨٣)
 أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ ۖ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ
 فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ ۖ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ ۗ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
 (٢:١٨٤)

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ
 الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۗ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا
 يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۚ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (٢:١٨٥)
 وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِ جُنَاحٌ وَلَا عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ إِذَا دَعَا إِلَىٰ دَعْوَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ أَوْ إِلَىٰ دَعْوَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ أَوْ إِلَىٰ دَعْوَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ أَوْ إِلَىٰ دَعْوَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ (٢:١٨٦)

أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَىٰ نِسَائِكُمْ ۚ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ
 تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۚ فَالَّذِينَ بَاسِرُونَ ۙ وَأَبْغَوْا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَكُلُوا وَ
 اشْرَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ۖ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَىٰ اللَّيْلِ ۚ
 وَلَا تُبَاسِرُوا ۚ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَجِدِ ۚ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا ۚ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لِنَاسٍ
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ (٢:١٨٧)

O believers! Fasting is prescribed for you—as it was for those before you—so perhaps you will become mindful [of Allah]. (2:183)

[Fast a] prescribed number of days. But whoever of you is ill or on a journey, then [let them fast] an equal number of days [after Ramadan]. For those who can only fast with extreme

difficulty, compensation can be made by feeding a needy person [for every day not fasted]. But whoever volunteers to give more, it is better for them. And to fast is better for you, if only you knew. (2:184)

Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was revealed as a guide for humanity with clear proofs of guidance and the decisive authority. So whoever is present this month, let them fast. But whoever is ill or on a journey, then [let them fast] an equal number of days [after Ramadan]. Allah intends ease for you, not hardship, so that you may complete the prescribed period and proclaim the greatness of Allah for guiding you, and perhaps you will be grateful. (2:185)

When My servants ask you [O Prophet] about Me: I am truly near. I respond to one's prayer when they call upon Me. So let them respond 'with obedience' to Me and believe in Me, perhaps they will be guided [to the Right Way]. (2:186)

It has been made permissible for you to be intimate with your wives during the nights preceding the fast. Your spouses are a garment for you as you are for them. Allah knows that you were deceiving yourselves. So He has accepted your repentance and pardoned you. So now you may be intimate with them and seek what Allah has prescribed for you. [You may] eat and drink until you see the light of dawn breaking the darkness of night, then complete the fast until nightfall. Do not be intimate with your spouses while you are meditating in the mosques. These are the limits set by Allah, so do not exceed them. This is how Allah makes His revelations clear to people, so they may become mindful [of Him].

Commentary and Hadith

The verses are very clear in their meanings. The sole purpose of fasting has been explained as bringing man closer to piety. The Arabic word *taqwa* is derived from the root Q-W-Y and it literally means 'to protect'. That has been used in an extended meaning to give the sense of protecting oneself from all sins and evils.

The last verse, #187, in the series explains the following details:

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1. Sexual relationships with one's wife during the days and nights of fasting are prescribed and explained. The context tells us that Muslims had been doing it anyway, during the nights of Ramadan, secretly, when the Prophet came to know of that, he explained that there was nothing wrong in doing that, since Allah has allowed you to go unto your wives during the night time of Ramadan, that is, hours when you are allowed to eat and drink. That implies that one has to be ritually clean before the time one stops the *suhoor* –time eating.
2. Exact timings of beginning and ending of the fast are explained.
3. Those who are not well enough to fast have been excused but are required to expiate or make up the fasts missed after Ramadan.
4. Those who are ill and cannot fast are allowed to do that as long as they pay the prescribed *fidya*.

Somehow a custom has become current in that Muslims fasting have to rush to eat at Iftar time and the saying is that if you delay breaking the fast your fast becomes *makrooh*. First of all, one has to establish the exact time of breaking the fast. It is not sunset, it is actually when darkness has fallen.

There is a *hadith* in Sahih Muslim, as follows:

“During a camping trip, the Prophet of Islam passed-by a couple of Arabs who were talking about this issue. One of them asked the other one: How do you ascertain the time of suhoor and breaking the fast? The other guy quoted this verse of the Qur'an and then said: I carry two ropes in my pillow, (the ropes with which I tie my camel). One of the ropes is black and the other is white, I keep looking at the two at the *suhoor* time. When I am able to distinguish between the two, I stop eating and drinking. Similarly, at breakfast time I look at the two ropes, when it becomes so dark that I cannot distinguish between the two ropes, I break my fast. The Prophet interrupted the Arabs and smilingly, he said: You seem to have a very large

pillow that can accommodate two ropes in it. Actually the black thread of night and the white thread of the dawn are symbolic terms for breaking of dawn and the darkness falling.”

The fast becoming makrooh is a nonsensical term, fasting is wajib and it is controlled by your *niyya* (intention). Your intention was that you would fast during the daylight hours. As soon as daylight hours end, your fast has ended, whether or not you eat or drink something.

Recently, the famous physicist and a scientist specializing in space sciences named Neil deGrasse Tyson has explained the issue in one of his tweets.



Neil deGrasse Tyson ✓
@neiltyson



The Qur'an says plainly that daytime fasting during Ramadan ends at "Dark" not at sunset. "Dark" is a good match for the end of twilight. This time of year: up to 15 mins later in equatorial latitudes. 30 mins at middle latitudes. And 45 mins at higher latitudes. I'm just saying.



8:24 PM · May 5, 2019

We do not follow scientific rulings in our worship and prayers, instead we follow Qur'an and *hadith*. But it is gratifying to know when a particular ruling of the *shari'a* is confirmed by scientific rulings.

Citations

Tyson, Neil. [@neiltyson]. “The Qur’an says plainly that daytime fasting during Ramadan ends at “Dark” not at sunset. “Dark” is a good match for the end of twilight. This time of year: up to 15 mins later in equatorial latitudes. 30 mins at middle latitudes. And 45 mins at higher latitudes. I’m just saying.” *Twitter*, 5 May 2019, <https://x.com/neiltyson/status/1125209616374226944>



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