



## “ EID-UL-FITR AND FASTING ”

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Assalamu Alaikum [Peace be upon you!].

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil (2:183).

And that you fast is better for you if you only knew (2:184).

Fasting in Islam falls under the category of heavenly difficulties which God in His almighty wisdom and mercy has ordained for man in order to equip him for his duties he owes to his Maker and also for those he owes to himself, his family, society and the creation of God in general.

So, in the month of Ramadhan [Ramazan] we are given certain extra obligations which we have to perform purely for the pleasure of God -- duties like abstaining from food, drink and sexual passions from dawn to dusk. But the exercise is not merely a physical one, for we are supposed to engage in extra devotion, give more in charity, cultivate the purest thoughts, hold in restraint our passions, etc. -- in fact, the aim is to effect a complete rejuvenation of the human personality and it impinges on every sphere of man's life on earth -- physical, moral, intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, and culminating in the spiritual.

Fasting also prepares us to give up not only our passion, appetites, desires, pleasures and possessions, but it is calculated to make us willing to sacrifice our very lives for the sake of God and in the service of mankind, and this readiness, of course, reaches its climax in the institution of the Pilgrimage, which comes on the heels of Fasting, and the symbolic sacrifice of animals at that time.

To appreciate the importance of Fasting, the following analogy is enlightening. A human being may love swimming and may learn and even teach all the rules of swimming, but if he is thrown into a deep pool of water he may very well drown for he has not actually learnt to swim. God does not want us to be like that person. Therefore, in order to perfect our love for Islam, which we cherish in our hearts, and in order to consolidate the principles of religion, which intellectually we know to be true and valid, He has ordained Fasting for us so that every part of our body should be impregnated with the beauty of our feelings and thoughts. In other words, just as blood flows from our hearts to our brain and to other parts of our bodies, so, too, must our pure and beautiful feelings and thoughts permeate every fibre and nerve of our bodies. And this can only be done by means of test and trial. That is why God says when He urges us to fast: It is better that you fast if only you knew (how good it is for you) (2:184).

May God bless us all as we celebrate the festival of Id-ul-Fitr and may the lessons we have learnt in the month of Ramadhan permeate our hearts and limbs and spread to the wider community so that we may all succeed in putting God first in our lives.

May God be with us all.