



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 "In the name of Allah,
 The Beneficent, The Merciful".



THE CALL

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RAMADAAN – It's History, Purpose and Regulations

by Al-Bahiy
 Al-Kholi

**Message
 from
 the President**

In the Name of Allah,
 the Beneficent, the Merciful

Editor's Note: Part of this article 'The Merit of the Ramadan Fast' appeared in last month's issue of 'The Call.'

We read in the Qur'an: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint." (2: 183).

It is evident from this verse that fasting is an ancient form of worship, prescribed for Muslims as well as other nations before the Muslims.

Muslim scholars differ in their opinion about what is specifically meant by "Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you" Some say that it refers to the time prescribed for the fast, that is to say, that God commanded the Jews and the Christians also to fast during the month of Ramadaan and that the Jews and Christians, however added more fasting days to the days of Ramadaan, then shifted the fasting from Ramadaan to other dates. Other scholars say that the reference is to the nature of fasting in that it is an ordinance to abstain

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"O, you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil."

For a certain number of days. But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man. So whoever does good spontaneously, it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know." (Holy Quran Chapter 2, Verses 183 & 184).

My Dear sisters and brothers in Islam, as we await the Holy Month of Ramadaan 1398 – the month of the greatest physical and spiritual blessings – we thank Almighty Allah for sparing our lives, so that we can again prepare ourselves to derive all the benefits that are in store for those who follow the injunctions given to us by Allah, Subhanuhuwa Taalah, in Al-Quran.

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APOLOGY

The Editor, Editorial Board and Members of the Executive of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-Islam Inc., Trinidad and Tobago wish to sincerely apologise to all our readers and well wishers for the non-appearance of the April, May and June issues of "THE CALL" (Vol. 3., Nos. 5, 6 and 7).

Several factors were responsible for these issues not being published, some of them being beyond our control.

We thank our readers for their enthusiastic requests for "THE CALL", and for their patience. Our Publication Department has now being streamlined and we hope in future, in Shaa Allah, "THE CALL" will be issued on time.

We believe in the finality of Prophethood in Muhammad.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ

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from certain actions and things invalidating the fast, while others believe that the reference is to fasting as being an obligatory commandment. That is, Muslims, Jews and Christians are all required to observe it, but that the Muslims differ from the Jews and Christians in the matter of the point of time and the manner of its observance.

Al-Manar Qur'an Commentary has this to say of the fasting of the Jews and the Christians:

"Nowhere in the books of the Old Testament do we find any definite text to prove that fasting was prescribed. (The Editor – "The Call" disagrees. God had commanded Jeremiah to proclaim the ninth month, a fast to all the people of Judah. (Jer. 36:9) It appears as if the Jews later changed this to the fifth and seventh months. (Zech. 7:5). We simply find praise of fasting and praise of those who fast. It is known that Moses had fasted for forty days and this proves that fasting was considered a form of worship. Nowadays, the Jews fast one week in the remembrance of the destruction of Jerusalem and they also fast one day in August. It is reported that the Jews were ordered in the Torah to fast on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish year. They used to fast that day together with its night and this is what they probably call 'ashoora. There are other fasting days which they observe.

"Likewise, there is no evidence in the Gospels to prove the obligatory nature of fasting for Christians. Fasting is simply mentioned as praiseworthy and is considered a rite. A person who fasts is ordered, according to the New Testament, to anoint his head and wash his face in order to remove all outward signs of the fast lest he seem a hypocrite like the Pharisees. The best-known and oldest Christian fasts is that of Lent, which precedes Easter. It is the same fasting period observed by Moses and Jesus and his apostles. Church leaders prescribe other forms of fast including abstinence from eating meat, fish, eggs and milk. There are differences, however, among the various churches with regard to these prescriptions. Early Christians used to follow the fasting procedure observed by the Jews, partaking of only one meal every twenty-four hours. This was later modified to fasting from midnight to mid-day.

"Fasting is an ancient form of worship recognized by previous religions, even paganism. It constituted an essential part of every religion. It was known to the ancient Egyptians, from whom it passed on to the ancient Greeks, who used to enforce it, principally, upon their women. The Romans also observed the fast and pagans in India and elsewhere practise fasting to this day."

Other pagans who observed the fast include:

- (1) The Sabians of Harran, who were ordered by their religion to abstain food and drink from sunrise to sunset for thirty days.
- (2) The Maniites (followers of Mani), whose religion commanded them to abstain from sunrise to sunset.
- (3) The Indians, who have certain holy days during when they fast. For certain spiritual ends they have to fast completely for a whole month. In order to attain some of these spiritual objectives they may fast a whole year, breaking the fast only once on the first day of each of the twelve months.

Now reverting to the words of the above quoted verse of the Qur'an, we find that they definitely state the purpose of fasting as understood by Islam. The words are, "That you may (learn) self-restraint ..." since genuine fasting helps us overcome baser human instincts and thereby sets us at the beginning of the road leading to perfection. To take this path, it

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The Significance Muhammad's

The Prophet Muhammad's message in relation to the message of the previous Prophets. (Extracted from the Islamic Review by Miss Rabia Syne).

The sense in which Islam claims to be not a new religion.

Usually when we talk about religion we hear that there are several different religions in the world and we tend to assume that there is an opposition between the different religions. For there is a large number of people in the world today who are striving to create a universal religion, thereby, it would seem, adding to the present confusion because they are introducing one more religion to the already existing ones. "Islam" which means "self surrender to God," does not claim to be a new religion in the

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I have selected the above two verses of the Holy Quran for your full attention as I will like you to ponder on them so that we can all understand that is incumbent on us all to FAST, except of course, we may fall in the category of the exempted ones.

On the sighting of the new moon, may we attune our whole self to communicate with Allah so that all our evil thoughts and actions will be eliminated completely and as we complete the number of days, we will radiate that brightness and light which Allah will be pleased for us to display.

May all Mosques throughout our Republic be filled nightly by our brothers and sisters who will be enjoying the further benefit of participating in congregational Tarawih Prayers. Subhaan Allah! Alhamdu-Lillah! Allahu Akbar!

Assalamu-Alaikum
rahmatulla wa barakatahu.

Mr. Enayat Mohammed
President,
Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Trinidad,

of the Prophet Advent

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sense that it is different from the others. For this reason it is stated in the Quran that the famous prophets of antiquity were Muslims; among those who are listed expressly by name being the prophets Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. It is also stated that the Prophet Muhammad brought a completion to the religion of these prophets. If they had been different there could not be such thing as bringing a completion.

Why Muhammad addressed himself first to the Jews and Christians.

The particular significance of the Prophet Muhammad's presence in this world seems to be principally in the spiritual field. As already stated, in Islam those prophets who were responsible for the development of such religions as Judaism and Christianity, that is to say, the prophets Moses and Jesus, are classed as Muslims by the Quran. It is also claimed by the Quran that as their followers later adulterated their messages with certain interpolations and changes. The forms taken by the religions which profess to follow those founders now no longer maintain the original purity of their messages. The message of the Prophet Muhammad was intended not only to complement and continue the messages given out by those previous prophets but also to correct such errors as their followers had fallen into.

It is for that reason that one of the first attempts of the Prophet Muhammad was to address himself to the Jewish and the Christian population of Arabia. It was only when he met with a great deal of hostility from those groups who would not recognize him, that he under Divine instructions made certain innovations. For example, we know that in early days of Islam the Muslims prayed facing Jerusalem, but later this was changed and they started praying facing Mecca, so that there should be no confusion, and so that it should not be thought that the Muslims belonged to the same religions as those other groups who would not recognize that the Prophet Muhammad was giving out the same truth as their own founders had done.

It is mentioned that the Prophet Mu-

hammad is necessary to be always on the alert lest those baser instincts afflict the heart once more. This is what the Qur'an means by *taqwa* or self-restraint. *Taqwa*, indeed, is a function of the heart and is a voluntary effort comprising the elements of caution, alertness and fear of God. The Prophet used to point to his chest and say: "Here is the seat of *taqwa*."

According to Abu Sulaiman al-Daaraani, the pious (*al-Muttaqun*) "are those whose hearts are purified by God from all lowly passions", In fact, once a person's heart has thus been purged, his actions will be for the sake of God, his speech addressed to God and his fate controlled by God alone. This would be the road leading to perfection.

Al-Bustani, a great Muslim mystic, was once asked to define a pious person (*al-Muttaqi*). He said: "he whose speech is addressed only to God and whose work is meant for God." Ubayy Ibn Ka'b understood *taqwa* to mean cautiousness. Once 'Umar asked him to define it, and his reply was:

"Have you ever walked along a thorny road?"

"Yes," 'Umar answered.

"What did you do?" Ubayy asked.

'Umar said: "I was cautious."

"That is *taqwa*," said Ubayy.

THE FAST OF RAMADAAN

"Ramadaan is the month wherein the Qur'an was revealed for the guidance of mankind and to serve as the criterion (of right and wrong). Whosoever of you witnesses this month shall fast in it, and whosoever is sick or on a journey shall fast a like number of other days. God desires ease for you and that you could complete the prescribed period (of fast) and that you may glorify God for having guided you, that perchance you may be grateful" (The Qur'an, 2:227).

Stages of development

According to Ibn Kathir, the commentator of the Qur'an, the Muslim fast went through three stages of development until it reached its present state:

(1) When the Prophet came to Medina, he used to fast three days every month in addition to the Day of Ashoora. As things were, the Muslims were not required, when they first arrived in Medina, to fast more than three days every month. Mu'aadh, Qataadah and 'Ataa claimed (as reported by Ibn 'Abbaas) that those three days were meant by the words in the above-quoted verse "for a fixed number of days".

(2) Opinions, however, differ in this matter; for according to some, the reference to "a fixed number of days" is to the month of Ramadaan. This difference of opinion about the number of days did not touch the essential question of the necessity of fasting three days every month.

(3) Explaining the fast of the Day of 'Ashoora, Ibn 'Abbaas reported that the Prophet had noticed that the Jews in Medina observed the fast on that day, The Prophet asked the reason for it and he was told by the Jews that it was a memorable day on which God delivered Moses and his people from their enemy and that Moses therefore observed it as a day of fasting. Whereupon the Prophet told the Jews, "Moses is closer to me than he is to you." He then observed the days as a fast and instructed the Muslims to fast on that day. He sent out a man to tour Medina on that day and announce to the Muslims that "he who had already eaten shall abstain the rest of the day and he who had not, shall fast the day. Today is the Day of 'Ashoora."

(4) When the fast of Ramadaan was prescribed in the second year of

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hammad came to complement and perfect the messages of the other prophets. In the Quran it is stated that no difference is made between the prophets from the Divine point of view, they being equal in the eyes of God. Now if they are all equal, how does it come about that it should be necessary to perfect their religions? Why is it that God says in the Quran (5:3): "This day I have perfected for you your religion," implying thereby that the previous forms of religion had not reached a perfect condition. If we go to the New Testament and study the words of the Prophet Jesus as recorded there, we find that according to John (16:12), Jesus says these words: "I have yet many things to say unto you but you cannot bear them now." Now these words mean that the Prophet Jesus himself was quite ready to give out a more complete form of teaching that what he actually gave to his audience they also indicate that his people were not at that particular time ready to receive any more than he was giving them. These words of Jesus are preceded by a prediction that another person will later come and will complement and complete his message (John 16:7, 14:7). Now it is the belief of Muslims that the person referred to by Jesus is the Prophet Muhammad. Most Christians are inclined to identify this person with a non-human force which they call the Holy Spirit, but this is incorrect.

The Claim that the Prophet Muhammad was more complete.

As to the claim that the Prophet Muhammad's, message was more complete, we have a tradition according to which he is reported to have said on one occasion, "If the Prophet Moses were living now, he would be obliged to follow me." Here again we have an example of the fact although all the prophets are all equal in the eyes of God, yet one of them can be given the destiny of giving humanity a more complete message than had been received by another of them. The evidence from Islam and Christianity is that there was only a variance in

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the Hijra, the fast on those days was abolished. The Prophet said, "The fast of Ramadaan has abolished every other fast."

(5) It is reported that 'Aisha once said: "When the Prophet came to Medina, he observed the Day of 'Ashoora as a day of fasting. When the fast of Ramadaan was prescribed the Prophet said, "Whoever wishes may fast on that day, and whoever wishes may drop it."

(6) The second stage begins when God prescribed the fast of Ramadaan. The new ordinance was announced in three verses. The first two were revealed together, followed later by the third.

In the first two verses, the Qur'an says:

"You who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may learn self-restraint. (Fast) for a fixed number of days, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey shall fast an equal number of days later. Those who can afford to fast (but do not) shall have to redeem themselves by feeding a poor person. But whosoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him, and that you fast is better for you if you did but know."

From this it is clear that the sick and those on a journey can miss fasting during Ramadaan. The sick will then have to make restitution of those days by fasting a similar number of days when they become well again, or when they are no longer on a journey. A man who is not sick and is not travelling and who is physically fit has a choice — either to fast or not. In the latter case he has to pay *fidyah* (ransom), which is the feeding of a poor person for every day he does not keep the fast. Al-Bukhaari has reported more than one *hadith* (Saying of the Prophet) to this effect.

The third verse is the one in which we read:

"Ramadaan is the month wherein the Qur'an was revealed for the guidance of mankind and to serve as the criterion of right and wrong. Whosoever of you witnesses this month shall fast during its duration, and whosoever is sick or on a journey shall fast an equal number of days later ... "

The third stage deals with the times of abstinence and indulgence — there were times of abstinence during the night as well as during the day:

- (a) When a man had said his 'ishaa prayers (the prayer before retiring) he was supposed to abstain from (*muftirat*), that is, food, drink and marital relations.
- (b) If a man slept (even before saying the 'ishaa prayers) he should abstain from the otherwise lawful things when he awoke.

Thus the saying of the 'ishaa prayers and sleep forced a man into a state of abstinence for the rest of the night and the following day until sunset. This was a hard condition for the early Muslims, for a man might doze off before *iftaar* (breaking of the fast), and thus had to continue his fast until the same time the next day. It is told that Qays Ibn Sarma al-Ansaari spent the day working in the field. At sunset he returned home and rested while his wife was preparing a meal. When she returned with it he was sound asleep, and when he awoke he had to continue the fast; by mid-day he fainted. Later, he told the Prophet Muhammad about it. Upon this the Prophet received the following instruction in the verse (2:187) which runs as follows:

"It is lawful for you on the night of the fast to go unto your wives; they are your garment and you are their garment. God knows that you mistrusted yourselves therein, so He turns towards you and forgives you. So go unto them and seek what God has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct from the black thread, then observe the fast till nightfall."

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THINGS TO ABSTAIN FROM DURING THE FAST

Those who fast should abstain from the following:

- (1) Food, drink and sexual intercourse from dawn till sunset, in accordance with the verse of the Qur'an:
"Now therefore go unto them and seek what God has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct from the black thread, then observe the fast till nightfall."

In this verse the "black thread" means the darkness of night and the "white thread" means the light of day at dawn.

Every Muslim man or woman may, during the nights of Ramadaan satisfy his or her desire in a lawful manner in the matter of food, drink and sex. When dawn comes he or she must abstain till sunset.

(2) The Prophet forbade Muslims who are fasting to indulge in any of the following:

- (a) Obscene speech. The Prophet said:
"While fasting, you shall not indulge in obscene speech or boisterous talk. If someone insults you or quarrels with you, tell him, 'I am one of those who are fasting'."
- (b) Falsehood in speech or action. The Prophet said:
"He who does not abstain from falsehood in words or deeds. God has no use of his abstaining from his food and drink."
- (c) Slander. One day the Prophet passed by women who, while fasting, were gossiping. He said:
"These two women abstained from what God had ordered them to do and indulged in what God had forbidden them to do."
- (d) Lying, lustful looks, false oaths, slander and calumny. The Prophet Muhammad said:
"Five things invalidate a man's fast — lying, slander, calumny, the false oath and the lustful look."

THINGS WHICH INVALIDATE THE FAST

(1) The Ramadaan fast is invalidated if a person deliberately eats, drinks, or indulges in sexual intercourse.

- (a) Deliberate eating or drinking invalidates the fast and necessitates asking for forgiveness.
- (b) Deliberate sexual intercourse invalidates the fast and necessitates *qadaa* (restitution) of another day's fast in place of it as well as *Kaffaarah* (atonement).

Kaffaarah (atonement) is achieved by setting free a slave, or a fast of two consecutive months, or the feeding of sixty poor people. This is based on the following story which is reported by Abu Hurairah:

"A man told the Prophet: 'I have committed a deadly sin'.

"The Prophet asked: 'What was it?'

"The man said, 'I slept with my wife during Ramadaan.'

"Have you any slave to set free?' the Prophet asked.

"'No', said the man.

"'Can you afford to feed sixty poor people?'

"'No,' again replied the man.

"Whereupon the Prophet went into his house, brought some dates and told the man, 'Take these and give them to some poor people.'

The man said, 'Can I find anyone poorer than my own family?'

"Laughing, the Prophet said, 'Then take them to your family'."

As for restitution, Abu Da'ud and Ibn Maajah in their *Collections* have reported that the Prophet had ordered the man who slept with his wife during the Ramadaan fast to fast another day instead, in addition to the *Kaffaarah*.

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the degree of the messages. People later made these into different religions, but originally they were aspects of the same truth.

IN THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM ARE INCLUDED ALL THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE DIVINITY MANIFESTED TO MANKIND FROM TIME TO TIME.

We are told that perhaps the most significant event in the life of the Prophet Muhammad was what is known as the "Mi'raj," and the "Mi'raj" means "the ascent." Many prophets are reported to have had experiences of an ascension, that is to say, experiencing in their soul certain states beyond human understanding and connected with an understanding of the nature of heaven. Now, leaving alone the spiritual grade of the Prophet Muhammad which was more complete than those of the prophets before him, we find a very interesting element in the description of his ascension — during this particular spiritual experience the Prophet Muhammad met, on his ascent, the Prophets Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. This is another way of saying that ***the real completeness of Islam lay in the passing through, or the infusion of all these different states known to the various prophets before Muhammad.***

There are many divine qualities and we know that different prophets have manifested different aspects of the Divinity and that no man has been able to manifest all its aspects. But what Islam claims is that its complete message includes all those of the previous great prophets and therefore there is fundamentally no opposition whatever between Islam and other religions except in so far as they themselves wish to make a differentiation. It is in this factor that lies the significance of the Prophet Muhammad's advent. ***For in Islam there is emphasis on the unity behind all the different teachings,*** and the fact that the followers of the different religions were taught to realize two concepts: (1) that they were aspects of the same truth and not opp-

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used to one another in their origin; and (2) the idea of evolution as far as messages given to humanity by God were concerned. To emphasize the idea of evolution in the messages given to humanity the Prophet Muhammad once said, "Speak to people in terms of their understanding, and not in terms of their own." The very fact that the Prophet derstanding and knowledge than what they actually taught to humanity, but they tried to align themselves with the requirements of the society of their day and to their environment and give out only what was necessary for the spiritual life of the followers.

N ISLAM THERE IS MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LIFE AFTER DEATH THAN IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Another point in which the message of Islam completes the messages of the other prophets is that more information is given regarding the nature of the after-life. If we look at the Old Testament we shall find that there is very little reference to survival after death. Besides, it is so ambiguous that we are told in the days of Jesus the Jewish people had divided themselves into two principal sects, one of which did believe in the after-life, one of which did not. It is true that in the New Testament there is a great deal of reference to the after-life, but here again very little is said about it; for the message of the Prophet Jesus is more concerned with the preparation of a man for the life after death than the life after death itself. In the Quran, however, we find that considerable space is given to minute descriptions of states beyond death, of the nature of heaven and so on, in a way that is not given by the books of any other of the major religions.

It must be emphasized that it is the message of the Prophets Jesus and Muhammad which have tried to emancipate religion from national barriers. Most other religions, such as Hinduism and Judaism, have been specifically racial; they have been limited to a particular

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(2) Fasting is also invalidated if a person deliberately vomits. In this case he has to fast a day by way of restitution. Abu Hurairah has reported that the Prophet Muhammad said:

"He who forces himself to vomit shall fast another day instead."

THINGS WHICH DO NOT INVALIDATE THE FAST

(1) Involuntary vomiting. Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet Muhammad had said that:

"He who is overcome by vomiting shall not make restitution."

(2) The cupping of blood from the head: Thaabit al-Bannaani asked Anas Ibn Maalik:

"Did the Prophet forbid head bleeding (cupping) for the person who fasts?" Anas said: "Not unless a person is weak."

(3) Wet dreams. The Prophet is reported to have said:

"A man's fast is not invalidated for involuntary vomiting or wet dreams."

(4) Unintentional eating or drinking. The Prophet said:

"God forgives my people for acts committed by mistake, or out of absent-mindedness, and acts performed under compulsion." He also said: "A man who fasts and who absent-mindedly eats or drinks shall continue his fast."

(5) Rinsing the mouth and bathing in an attempt to reduce the effect of the summer heat. One of the Prophet's companions reported that he used "to see the Prophet pour water on his head while he was fasting."

(6) If a man gets up in the morning in a state of ritual uncleanness, it does not affect his fast.

(7) If one eats, drinks, or unwittingly contravenes some other injunction, the fast is not invalidated, for the Qur'an says:

"You are not to blame for what you do by mistake, but you are for premeditated acts." (33:5).

Zaid Ibn Wahb is reported to have said: "People broke the fast in the time of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattaab. I have seen water vessels, brought from the house of Hafsa, from which the people drank. Immediately, the sun appeared from behind a cloud. The people wanted to fast another day in restitution, but 'Umar intervened. 'Why?' he said. 'By God, we did not mean any wrong.'

THE SICK AND THOSE ON A JOURNEY

A sick person or traveller is allowed to fast a number of days equal to those he missed during Ramadaan as a result of illness or travel. The Qur'an does not mention any specific kind of sickness and does not describe the kind of sickness which exempts a person from the fast during the month of Ramadaan. Therefore, one suffering from any ailment whatsoever may avail oneself of this concession. The Qur'an contains a general statement and does not specify the severity of pain or degree of danger involved. Some of the early 'Ulema granted exemption even in the case of a painful finger.

The Qur'an also did not specify, in the case of a journey, the distance or means of transport used, so the permission applies to all cases of travel whether a person is travelling on foot, or on an animal, by train, or by plane.

A traveller who happens to be observing the fast may break it any time he feels like doing so. Ibn 'Abbaas said:

"The Prophet and the believers went out during Ramadaan in the year of the conquest of Mecca. On the way they passed by a stream. It was noon and the thirsty people stretched out their necks while their souls burned with the desire to drink. The Prophet called for a vessel full of

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water which he held up high so that everybody could see it. Then he drank and everyone else followed his example."

One may break the fast before starting on a journey. Muhammad Ibn K'ab said:

"I called at the house of Anas Ibn Maalik one day in Ramadaan. Anas was preparing to go on a journey. His camel was saddled and he was dressed for the journey. He asked for food, which he ate, and I said to him, 'Is the breaking of the fast in this fashion a *sunnah* (an act of the Prophet)?' He answered, 'Yes, it is a *sunnah*.' Then he mounted and left."

If a man happens to enter during a journey a town where he does not intend to stay permanently, he may fast or break the fast. Ibn 'Abbaas reported:

"The Prophet embarked on the conquest of Mecca during Ramadaan. He observed the fast until he reached al-Kadid, a well between Qudaid and 'Usfaan; then he broke the fast until the month had passed."

PREGNANT AND NURSING WOMEN

Pregnant and nursing women may break the Ramadaan fast but shall fast a number of days, equal to those missed, after pregnancy or nursing ceases. In other words, pregnant and nursing women are in the same position as a traveller, being free to choose between breaking the fast or keeping it.

According to a *hadith* related by Anas Ibn Maalik al-Ka'bi, the Prophet said:

"God has relieved a traveller from part of the prayers and relieved him along with pregnant and nursing women from fasting."

Pregnant and nursing women may also break the fast if they fear injury either to themselves or their infants. However, they should do the restitution.

OLD AGE

The *'ulema* have different opinions as regards old people. Some *'ulema* are of the opinion that if an old man is unable to fast, he may break the fast provided he feeds a poor man for each day he breaks the fast. That is what is meant by the term *fidyah*. Others have opined that an old person was free not to observe the fast, without *fidyah*, on the strength of the Qur'anic verse:

"On no soul does God Place a burden greater than it can bear."

The stipulation regarding old persons applies to people afflicted with incurable illnesses.

The Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh is of the opinion that people engaged in hard manual work like mining, or prisoners sentenced to hard labour, may break the fast if they can afford the *fidyah*.

VARIOUS ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

(1) The Prophet recommended taking the *sahoor* (the meal taken before daybreak). He said:

"Do not miss the *sahoor* for it is blessed; take even a mouthful of water. God and His angels greet those who take their *sahoor*."

(2) It is recommended to take the *iftaar* meal as early as possible and the *sahoor* meal as late as possible. The Prophet said:

"My people are blessed as long as they take their *iftaar* early and their *sahoor* late."

(3) The time for *sahoor* extends until dawn. If the call to the *fajr* (dawn) prayers is announced and a man still has the cup in his hand, he

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group of human beings in a particular part of the world. But the message of the Prophet Jesus, although addressing in his lifetime principally the Jews, was meant to break away from the bonds of national belief and try to get to something more universal. Now, that again finds its completeness in the Quran, where there is very great emphasis on the unity of humanity, and the fact that all Muslims are to be considered as brothers irrespective of such conditions as the financial, economic position. The unity of humanity seems to have been realized in practice more in the Muslim community than among any of the followers of any other religion.

Muhammad's message and our daily life.

A final point with reference to the spiritual message of Muhammad is where we see again the bringing of new factors into religious life. Among the Jewish people the Old Testament religion was specifically something that belonged to the group or the race. The Individual had very little direct contact with God, for the priest was responsible for the congregation and the group was responsible for the individual. When the individual committed a great sin, it had to be expiated by the community. Here we see a new development with the message of Prophet Jesus where there is a turning away from the external factors and there appears in his message the new individual approach to God. The idea of the individual attempt to reach God, and that instead of praying in public one should pray to God in secret, is stressed upon in Christianity. In the Gospels very little attention is given to social problems, such as marriage. And as to economic questions, in fact there are cases where individuals are recommended to sell everything that they have. But in Islam we find these two factors of Judaism and Christianity are combined, that is to say, the individual is to try to perfect his inner life, to get as close as possible to God and (having done that with what he has understood of spiritual principles), he is to try to bring this to some practical and creative result for the benefit of the society he lives in.

