

Ramadan, the Muslim Month of Fasting, Mubarak



Fasting and prayers in the holy month of Ramadan deck and dress one's heart for attending to God's Reception.



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Divine Feast

Imam Khomeini the world religious and spiritual leader used to highlight the philosophy of divine feast during the holy month of Ramadan. He also insisted on availing opportunities of self-training and self-purification during these divine days.

The Blessed Month of Ramadan is an Invitation to God's Feast: Imam Khomeini

The sacred month of Ramadan is ahead; a month in which you should strengthen yourself morally. There is a tradition attributed to the Noble Messenger about informing the people of the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan. One of the phrases is: "You have been invited to God's feast." The difference between God's feast and peoples' feasts is that when you go to a feast, you will have some items of food to eat and means of entertainment befitting your status. But in God's feast, one part is to observe the fast. Another important item which is a] spiritual [meal from the Unseen, is the Holy Qur'an. You have been invited to His feast; you are His guest in the month of Ramadan. Your host has compelled you to fast. Block those avenues that lie open to worldly considerations and lusts so that you are prepared for the "Laylatuul-Qadr."



The month of Sha`ban is the prelude to the holy month of Ramadan. It prepares the people for the holy month and for the feast of God. When you want to go to a party, you do not go in your usual, everyday dress. You normally dress up in another way and attend the party in a different manner. You modify your manners from what they might be when you are at home. The month of Sha`ban is the time for that preparation before attending the party, just as you get ready and make yourself look a bit different from the way you appear in your house. Sha`ban is the month that prepares these people; these Muslims, for" God's Feast." And the manner of preparation lies in the "Munajat-e Sha`baniyyah." I have not seen any other supplication that has been said to have been recited by all the Imams, as is the case with this Sha`baniyyah Supplication. This supplication is unique in this regard; I do not recall any other one that the Imams used to recite. The purpose of this Sha`baniyyah Supplication is to prepare you and everyone for" God's Feast."

Sahifeh-ye Imam, vol. 13, p. 28

Doors Opening Towards Divine Mercy

And good work is a work which is congruous with the spirit. However, you see that many of man's works are only congruent with the body. "Enjoining" is also not practiced. If you are dominated by love of the world and love of the self, and if this prevents you from perceiving truths and realities, and prevents you from performing deed purely for God, and if you are kept from enjoining the truth and enjoining patience, and you are thereby obstructed from the way to guidance, then you will be lost.

You will be lost in this world and in the next, for you will have given up your youth and will be prohibited from the blessings of heaven and otherworldly advantages, and also lack this world. If others have no way to heaven, and if the doors to divine mercy are closed to them, if they are to abide eternally in the fire of hell, at least they will have had the world, they will have enjoyed worldly advantages, but you...

Beware, lest love of the world and love of the self gradually increase within you, to the point that Satan is able to take away your faith. It is said that all of the efforts of Satan are for the sake of robbing faith. All of his efforts and labors, night and day, are for the sake of taking away the faith of men.

No one has given you a document to guarantee your faith. Perhaps one's faith is merely on loan [*mustawda*], and in the end Satan will get it, and you will leave this world with enmity for the Blessed and Exalted God and His *awliya*. Perhaps one will have enjoyed an entire life of divine blessings, provide for by Imam az-Zaman ('a) and, God forbid, in the end one may give up his life without faith and in enmity toward the Bestower of the Blessings.

If you have any interest in, relation with and affection for, the world, try to cut it. This world, with all its superficial splendor and glitter is too insignificant to be worthy of love, especially for one who has divested himself of such superficialities of life. What do you have of this world that your heart should be attached to it? You have naught but the mosque, the prayer niche, the seminary, the corner of a room. Is it proper for you to compete for the mosque and the prayer niche?

Should this be a cause of disagreement among you, to corrupt the society? Suppose that, like the worldly people, you had a comfortable sumptuous life, and that, God forbid, you spent your life on feasting and drinking. After your life is over, you would see that your life had passed like a pleasant dream, but the requital and liability for it will be with you always.

What values does this fleeting and apparently sweet life have (assuming that it is very sweet) in comparison to endless chastisement? The chastisement of worldly people is sometimes endless. The worldly people, who imagine that they have acquired the world and benefit from its advantages and boons, are remiss and



mistaken. Everyone sees the world from the window of his own environment and situation, and imagines that the world is exactly that which he has.

The physical world is broader than that which man imagines he has acquired, discovered and through which, he roams. It has been narrated about this world with all its means and ways that: "He has never looked kindly upon it." 7So, how must the other world be upon which God, the Blessed and Exalted, has looked kindly? What is the source of greatness to which man is called and what is it like? Man is too low to comprehend the source of greatness.



If you purify your intentions, rectify your deeds, expel love of self and position from your hearts, a high station will be prepared for you. The whole world and what exists will be prepared for you. The whole world and what exists in it along with its superficial aspects is not worth even a cent by comparison to the station prepared for the righteous servants of God. Try to achieve this lofty station.

If you are able, try to make something of yourselves and improve yourselves so that you may pay no heed even to this lofty station. Do not worship God in order to reach this station but rather call upon Him and prostrate yourselves with your heads upon the earth before Him because He is worthy of worship and the Almighty. In that case you will have torn through curtains of light and have attained the source of greatness.

Can you obtain such a position with these deeds and actions which you perform? Can this be reached by the path you tread? Is it easy to be saved from divine chastisement and to escape the terrible torment and the fire of hell? Do you imagine that the weeping of the Pure Imams and the cries of Imam Sajjad (*PBUH*) were a teaching, and that they wanted to instruct others about how to cry? With all this spirituality and the lofty position they hold, they wept for fear of God!

They understood how difficult and dangerous it is to advance along the way before them. They were aware of the difficulties, hardships and problems of crossing the *sirat*, which has this world at one end and the next world at the other and which passes through hell. They were aware of the world of the grave, of the *barzakh*, and of the resurrection, and of their terrible torments, and hence they were never content and always took refuge in God from the intense chastisement of the other world.

What thought have you given to these terrible devastating torments, and what way have you found to salvation from them? When are you going to decide to reform and refine yourselves? Now, while you are young, have the strength of youth, you have power over your faculties, and physical weaknesses have not yet overtaken you.

If you do not think of refinement and of making something of yourselves, then how will you able to do it when you become old, when your bodies and souls are in the grip of weakness and feebleness, and you have lost your will power, your

decisiveness and your resistance, and when the burden of your sins has blackened your hearts? With every breath and every step you take, and with each passing moment of your life, reform becomes more difficult, and it is possible for darkness and corruption to increase.

The more one's age advances, the more the things which conflict with human felicity multiply and the more one's powers are weakened. Thus, when old age arrives, it is difficult to be successful at refinement and the acquisition of the virtues and piety (*taqwa*). One is unable to repent, for repentance is not merely the verbal expression, "I repent before Allah," rather, contrition and the resolve to abandon one's sin are also necessary.



Such contrition and resolve are not to be obtained by one who has engaged in backbiting and lying for fifty or seventy years, whose beard has become white with sin and transgression. Such a person is afflicted with sin to the end of his life. Youths should not sit still the dust of age turns them grey. (I have reached old age, and am aware of its misfortunes and difficulties). While you are young, you are able to accomplish something.

While you enjoy the strength and determination of youth you can expel selfish desires, worldly attractions and animal wants from yourselves. However, if you do not think about reform and making something of yourselves while you are young, it will be too late when you become old. Think, while you are young, before you become old and exhausted. A young heart is subtle and celestial, and within it the motivation for corruption is weak.

However, the older one gets the stronger and more firm is the source of sin implanted in the heart, until it can no longer be uprooted, as it is reported. The heart of man is clear and shining like a mirror. With each sin a man commits, another black mark is added to the heart, until it becomes black, so that it is possible a night and day cannot pass without the commission of a sin against the Lord.

When old age arrives, it is difficult to return one's heart to its original form and state. If, God forbid, you have not reformed yourself when you leave the world, in what manner do you expect to meet God, when your heart is black and your eyes, ears and tongue are polluted by sins? How can you return that with which you have entrusted by God when it has become polluted and wicked, while it was given to you in perfect purity and cleanliness?

These eyes and ears which are under your control, this hand and tongue which are at your command, these organs and limbs with which you live—all have been entrusted to you by God, the Almighty, and were given to you in perfect purity and righteousness. If they are afflicted with sin, they become polluted. If, God forbid, they are polluted with that which is forbidden, wickedness results.

When the time comes to return this trust, it is possible that you will be asked if this is the right way to protect the trust which was given you. When the trust was placed under your control, was it like this? Was the heart which you were given like this? Were the eyes which were bestowed upon you like this? Were the other organs and limbs which were placed at your will this polluted and dirty? What will be your answer to these questions?

How will you meet God when you have committed such treachery with regard to that with which you have been entrusted? You are young. You have spent your youth in such a way that from a worldly perspective you have given up many benefits. If you use this valuable time and the spring of your youth in the way of God and with a specific sacred purpose, then it has not been wasted, but rather this world and the next have been determined for you.



However, if your behavior is of such a manner as is currently witnessed, then you have wasted your youth and the prime of your life has been passed in vain. In the other world also, various severe difficulties, calamities and troubles will grab you by the neck, and you will fall into the whirlpool of misfortunes and disaster.

Have you said the *Munajat* of Sha‘ban for God, the Blessed and Supreme, during this month of Sha‘ban in which it has been advised to recite this devotion from the first until the last month? Have you benefited from its lofty meanings which teach increased faith and knowledge [*ma‘rifat*] with regard to the station of the Lord?

It is reported with regard to this supplication that it is the *munajat* of Imam ‘Ali, peace be with him and his descendants, and that all of the immaculate Imams, peace be with them, called upon Allah by this devotion. Very few supplications and devotions [*du‘a wa munajat*] may be found which were recited by all of the Imams (‘a) for God.

This devotion is truly an introduction to admonish and prepare man to accept the responsibilities of the blessed month of Ramadan, and it is possible that it is also to remind the aware person of the motive for fasting and its valuable fruits.

The immaculate Imams, peace be with them, have explained many things by the tongue of supplication. The tongue of supplication is very different from the other tongues by which those greats explained precepts. They have explained most spiritual, metaphysical, and precisely divine matters, and that which is related to knowledge of Allah by the tongue of supplication. But we recite supplications to the end and unfortunately pay no attention to their meanings, and we fail to understand what they really want to say.

In this *munajat* we read: “O my God! Grant that I may be perfectly cut off from all else but You, and enlighten the vision of our hearts by the radiance of vision toward

You, until the visions of the heart tear through the curtains of light and attach to the Source of Greatness and our souls come to belong to Your Exalted Sanctity.”

It is possible that the meaning of the sentence, “O my God! Grant that I may be perfectly cut off from all else but You,” is that prior to the blessed month of Ramadan, divinely aware people should get ready and prepare themselves for cutting themselves off and avoiding worldly pleasures (and this avoidance is that very being cut off perfectly from all else but Allah). Being perfectly cut off from all else is not something easily obtained.

It requires extra hard practice, going to some lengths, spiritual exercises, perseverance, and discipline, until one is able to fix one’s attention completely on nothing but God and cut himself off from all else. If someone is able to do this, he has reached a great felicity. However, with the least attention to this world it is impossible to be cut off from all else but Allah.



How to Observe Fasting during Holy Month of Ramadan?

Someone who wants to perform the fast of the blessed month of Ramadan with such manners as he has been asked to, must cut himself off completely from all else so that he can observe the manners for the celebration and feast [of Allah], coming to know of the station of the Host, insofar as this is possible.

According to the order of the Holy Apostle, peace be upon him and his progeny, (which is related in one of his sermons) all of the servants of God, the Supreme, have been invited by Him to a feast in the blessed month of Ramadan and are to be the guests of the Provider at His feast. He says there: “O you people! The month of Allah is approaching you...and you have been invited in it to the feast of Allah.”

In this few days until the blessed month of Ramadan, you should reflect, reform yourselves, and pay attention to God Almighty, seek forgiveness for your unbecoming behavior and deeds, and if, God forbid, you have committed a sin, repent for it prior to entering the blessed month of Ramadan. Habituate your tongue to intimate devotions [*munajat*] to God the Almighty.

God forbid that in the blessed month of Ramadan you should backbite or slander, or in short, sin, and so become polluted by transgression in the presence of the Lord, the Exalted, at His feast. You have been invited during this honorable month to the banquet of God the Almighty, “and you have been invited in it to the feast of Allah,” so, get yourself ready for the magnificent feast of the Almighty.

At least respect the formal and exoteric manners of fasting (The true manners of fasting are another matter entirely, and require constant care and effort). The meaning of fasting is not merely refraining from eating and drinking, one must also keep oneself from sin. This is the primary etiquette of fasting for novices (The etiquette of fasting for divine people who want to reach the mine of greatness is other than this).

You should at least observe the primary etiquette of fasting, and in the same way that you refrain from eating and drinking, you should keep your eyes, ears and tongue from transgression. From now on, keep your tongue from backbiting, slander, speaking bad, and lies, and expel from your hearts all spite, envy, and other ugly satanic attributes. If you are able, cut yourself off from all but Allah. Perform your deeds sincerely and without duplicity.

Cut yourselves off from the Satans among humans and the jinn, although we ourselves apparently cannot aspire to reaching such a valuable state of felicity. At least try to see to it that your fast is not accompanied by sin. Otherwise, even if your fast is correct from the point of view of Islamic law, it will not ascend to be accepted by God. There is a big difference between the ascension of one's works and their acceptance on the one hand, and their religious correctness on the other.

If, by the end of the blessed month of Ramadan, there is no change in your works and deeds, and your ways and manners are no different than they were before the month of fasting, it is evident that the fast which you were expected to perform was not realized, and that which you have done is no more than a vulgar physical fast.

In this noble month, in which you have been invited to the divine banquet, if you do not gain insight [*ma'rifat*] about God the Almighty nor insight into yourself, it means that you have not properly participated in the feast of Allah. You must not forget that in this blessed month, which is the 'month of Allah', in which the way of divine mercy is opened to the servants of God and the satans and devils, according to some reports, are locked in chains.

If you are not able to reform and refine yourselves, and to manage and control your *nafs al-ammara* [the commanding soul], to subdue your selfish lusts and to cut off your relations and interests with this world and material things, then after the end of the month of fasting it will be difficult for you to be able to accomplish this. Therefore, take advantage of this opportunity before the magnificent grace of it vanishes, and purify and reform yourselves.

Get ready and prepare to perform the duties of the month of fasting. Let it not be that prior to the arrival of the month of Ramadan you are like one who is wound up by the hand of Satan so that in this single month when the satans are enchained you automatically busy yourselves with sin and deeds opposed to the orders of Islam!

Sometimes due to his distance from God and the great number of his sins, the rebellious and sinful man sinks so low into darkness and ignorance that he does not need Satan to tempt him, but he himself takes on the color of Satan. "*Sibghatullah*" is the opposite of the color of Satan.

Someone who pursues selfish desires and who is obedient to Satan gradually turns the color of Satan. You should decide at least in this month to control yourselves and to avoid speech and behavior which displeases God, the Supreme. Right now in this very session make a covenant with God that during the blessed month of Ramadan you will avoid backbiting, slander and speaking ill of others.

Bring your tongue, eyes, hands, ears, and other organs and limbs under your control. Manage your deeds and your words. It is possible that this same worthy deed will result in God's paying attention to you and blessing you. After the month of fasting, when the satans are released from their chains, you will have been reformed, and you will no longer listen to the lies of Satan, and you will refine yourselves.

I repeat, decide during these thirty days of the blessed month of Ramadan to control your tongue, eyes, ears, and all your organs and limbs, and pay constant attention to the judgment of the *shari'ah* about the works you intend to do, and the words you intend to speak and the subject you intend to listen to. This is the elementary and outward manner of keeping a fast. At least keep to this outward manner of fasting!

If you observe that someone is about to backbite, prevent him and say to him that we have made a covenant that during these thirty days of Ramadan to keep ourselves from prohibited affairs. And if you are not able to keep him from backbiting, leave that session. Do not just sit there and listen. The Muslims must be safe from you.

Someone from whose hands, tongue and eyes other Muslims are not safe is not truly a Muslim, although he may be outwardly and formally a Muslim who has formally proclaimed: "*La ilaha illallah*" (There is no god but Allah). If, God forbid, you want to offend somebody, to slander them or to backbite, you should know that you are in the presence of the Lord; you are to be the guest of God the Almighty, and in the presence of God.

The Supreme, you would behave rudely to one of His servants, and to slander one of the servants of God is to slander God. They are the servants of God, especially if they are the scholars on the path of knowledge and piety [*taqwa*]. Sometimes you see that because of such affairs man reaches such a state that he denies God at the moment of his death! He denies the divine signs:

"Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the signs of Allah and used to mock them." (Surat al-Rum: 10)

These things occur gradually. Today, an incorrect view; tomorrow, a word of backbiting; and the next day, slander against a Muslim, and little by little these sins accumulate in the heart, and make the heart black and prevent man from attaining knowledge [*ma'rifat*] of Allah, until it reaches the point that he denies everything and rejects the truth.

According to some *ayah* of the Qur'an as interpreted through some reports, the deeds of men will be presented to the Prophet and the pure Imams (peace be upon them) and will be reviewed by them.

When the Prophet reviews your deeds and he sees how many errors and sins there are, how upset and distressed will he be? You do not want the Apostle of God to become upset and distressed; you do not want to break his heart and make him sad.

When he witnesses that the page of your deeds is replete with backbiting, slander and speaking ill of other Muslims and that all your attention was devoted to this worldly

and materialistic affairs and that your heart was overflowing with malice, hatred, spite, and suspicion towards each other, it is possible that in the presence of God, the Supreme and Holy, and the angels of Allah, he will be embarrassed that his community and followers were ungrateful for their divine blessings.

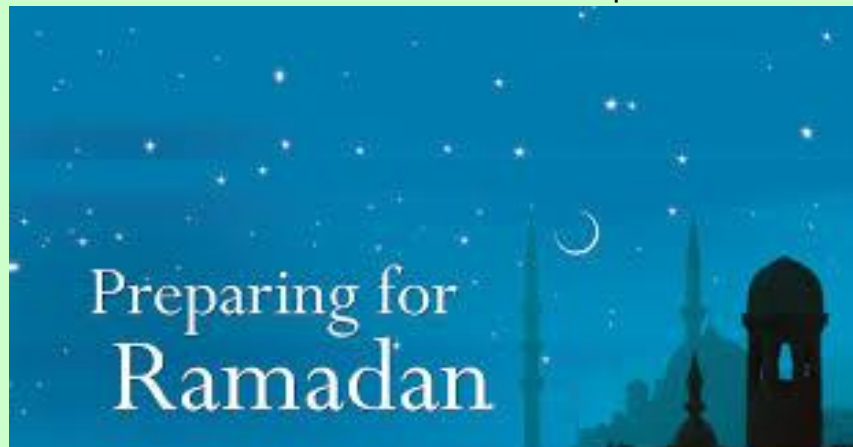
And thus unbridled and heedless they betrayed the trust of God, the Holy and Supreme. Someone who is related to us, even in a menial position, if he errs, we become embarrassed. You are related to the Apostle of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be with him and his progeny; by entering the seminary, you have related yourself to the Law of Islam, the most Noble Apostle and the Noble Qur'an.

If you perform ugly deeds, it upsets the Prophet and he cannot bear it, and God forbid, you may be damned. Do not let the Apostle of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and the pure Imams become upset and saddened. The heart of man is like a mirror, clear and bright, and because of too much attention of this world and too many sins, it becomes dark. However, if a person at least performs the fast for God.

The Almighty, sincerely and without duplicity (I am not saying that other acts of worship are not to be pure; it is necessary for all of the acts of worship to be performed sincerely and without duplicity), then this worship which is a turning away from lust, putting aside pleasure, and cutting oneself off from all but God, if it is performed well in this single month, perhaps the grace of God will be extended to him and the mirror of his heart will be cleaned of its blackness and tarnish.

And there is hope that he will change his ways and become dissuaded from this wilderness and worldly pleasures. When the Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*) arrives, one will gain the illumination which is obtained on that night by the friends of God and the believers. The reward of such a fast is God, as it has been reported: "The fast is for me and I am its reward." Nothing else could be the reward of such a fast.

A garden of blessings would not count as a worthy reward for such a fast. If a man takes fasting to mean closing his mouth to food but opening it for backbiting, and in the warm and friendly meetings with company in the nights when there is opportunity and time he engages in backbiting until *sahar*, such fasting will be of no benefit and



have no effect. Rather, one who fasts in this way has not observed the etiquette of the banquet of God.

He has violated the rights of his Benefactor, the Benefactor who has provided him with all the means and conveniences of life before creating him, and has provided for the means of his development. He sent the prophets to guide him. He sent down the heavenly books. Man has been given the power to approach the source of greatness and the light of felicity, has been favored with intellect and perception, and has been the recipient of His generosity.

Now, He has invited His servants to enter His guest house and to sit at the table of His blessings where they are to thank and to praise Him to the extent that their tongues and hands are able. Is it right for the servants who benefit at the table of His blessings and who use the means and conveniences which He has freely provided for them that they should oppose their Master and Host and to rebel against Him?

Is it right that they should use these things in opposition to Him against His wishes? Wouldn't this be biting the hand that feeds one and the height of ingratitude for man to sit at the table of his Master and with rude and impudent behavior and actions to audaciously insult his honored Host who is his benefactor, performing ugly and evil deeds before the Host?

The guests must at least know who their Host is, and become aware of His dignity. They should be acquainted with the customs and manners of the sessions. They should try not to rebel by performing deeds which conflict with virtue and decorum. The guests of the Supreme Being must come to know the divine station of the presence of the Lord of Majesty.

A station of which the Imams, peace be with them, and the great divine prophets were constantly seeking greater knowledge and more perfect awareness, and wanted to obtain such a source of light and greatness. "And enlighten the eyes of our hearts with the light of the radiance of looking at you, until the vision of the hearts tears through the curtains of light and is then united with the source of greatness." The banquet of Allah is that very "source of greatness."

God, the Blessed and Exalted, has invited His servants to enter the source of light and greatness. However, if the servant is not appropriate, he will not be able to enter into such a splendid and sumptuous position. God, the Exalted, has invited his servants to all sorts of favors and boons and to numerous spiritual pleasures, but if they are not prepared to be present at such lofty positions, they will not be able to enter.

How can one enter the presence of the Lord and the guest house of the Lord of lords which is the source of greatness with spiritual pollution, vices, and sins of the body and soul? It requires merit. Preparation is necessary. In disgrace and with polluted hearts which are covered by veils of darkness, one will not be able to understand these spiritual meanings and truths. One must tear these veils and push aside these dark and light curtains which cover the heart and are barriers to union with Allah so that one will be able to enter the brilliant and splendid divine company.

(Excerpts from Imam Khomeini's famous book of "combat with the self or purification of the self")

Imam Sajjad's Supplication for the Arrival of Month of Ramadan

* Praise belongs to God who guided us to His praise and placed us among the people of praise, that we might be among the thankful for His beneficence and that He might recompense us for that with the recompense of the good-doers!

* And praise belongs to God who showed favor to us through His religion, singled us out for His creed, and directed us onto the roads of His beneficence, in order that through His kindness we might travel upon them to His good pleasure, a praise which He will accept from us and through which He will be pleased with us!

* And praise belongs to God who appointed among those roads His month, the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting, the month of submission, the month of purity, the month of putting to test, the month of standing in prayer, in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance to the people, and as clear signs of the Guidance and the Separator!

* He clarified its excellence over other months by the many sacred things and well-known excellences which He placed therein, for He made unlawful in it what He declared lawful in others to magnify it, He prohibited foods and drinks in it to honor it, and He appointed for it a clear time which He (majestic and mighty is He) allows not to be set forward and accepts not to be placed behind.

* Then He made one of its nights surpass the nights of a thousand months and named it the Night of Decree; in it the angels and the Spirit descend by the leave of their Lord upon every command, a peace constant in blessings until the rising of the dawn upon whomsoever He will of His servants according to the decision He has made firm.

* O God, bless Muhammad and his Household, inspire us with knowledge of its excellence, veneration of its inviolability, and caution against what Thou hast forbidden within it, and help us to fast in it by our restraining our limbs from acts of



disobedience toward Thee and our employing them in that which pleases Thee, so that we lend not our ears to idle talk and hurry not with our eyes to diversion.

* we stretch not our hands toward the forbidden and stride not with our feet toward the prohibited, our bellies hold only what Thou hast made lawful and our tongues speak only what Thou hast exemplified, we undertake nothing but what brings close to Thy reward and pursue nothing but what protects from Thy punishment! Then rid all of that from the false show of the false showers and the fame seeking of the fame seekers, lest we associate therein anything with Thee or seek therein any object of desire but Thee!

*O God, bless Muhammad and his Household, in it make us attend to the appointed moments of the five prayers within the bounds Thou hast set, the obligations Thou hast decreed, the duties Thou hast assigned, and the times Thou hast specified.



* And in the prayers make us alight in the station of the keepers of their stations, the guardians of their pillars, their performers in their times, as Thy servant and Thy messenger set down in his Sunna (Thy blessings be upon him and his Household) in their bowings, their prostrations, and all their excellent acts, with the most complete and ample ritual purity and the most evident and intense humility!

* Give us success in this month to tighten our bonds of kin with devotion and gifts, attend to our neighbors with bestowal and giving, rid our possessions from claims, purify them through paying the alms, go back to him who has gone far from us, treat justly him who has wronged us, make peace with him who shows enmity toward us (except him who is regarded as an enemy in Thee and for Thee, for he is the enemy whom we will not befriend, the party whom we will not hold dear).

* And seek nearness to Thee through blameless works which will purify us from sins and preserve us from renewing faults, so that none of Thy angels will bring for Thee the kinds of obedience and sorts of nearness-seeking unless they to be less than what we bring!

* O God, I ask Thee by the right of this month and by the right of him who worships Thee within it from its beginning to the time of its passing, whether angel Thou hast brought nigh to Thee, prophet Thou hast sent, or righteous servant Thou hast singled out, that Thou bless Muhammad and his Household, make us worthy of the generosity Thou hast promised Thy friends, make incumbent for us what Thou hast made incumbent for those who go to great lengths in obeying Thee, and place us in the ranks of those who deserve through Thy mercy the highest elevation!

* O God, bless Muhammad and his Household, turn us aside from deviation in professing Thy Unity, falling short in magnifying Thee, in Thy religion, blindness

toward Thy path, heedlessness of Thy inviolability, and being deceived by Thy enemy, the accursed Satan!

* O God, bless Muhammad and his Household, and when in every night of this month's nights Thou hast necks which Thy pardon will release and Thy forgiveness disregard, place our necks among those necks and place us among the best folk and companions of this our month!

* O God, bless Muhammad and his Household, efface our sins along with the effacing of its crescent moon, and make us pass forth from the ill effects of our acts with the passing of its days, until it leaves us behind, while within it Thou hast purified us of offenses and rid us of evil deeds!

* O God, bless Muhammad and his Household, and should we go off to one side in this month, set us aright; should we swerve, point us straight; and should Thy enemy Satan enwrap us, rescue us from him!

* O God, fill this month with our worship of Thee, adorn its times with our obedience toward Thee, help us during its daytime with its fast, and in its night with prayer and pleading toward Thee, humility toward Thee, and lowliness before Thee, so that its daytime may not bear witness against our heedlessness, nor its night against our neglect!

* O God, make us like this in the other months and days as long as Thou gives us life, and place us among Thy righteous servants, those who shall inherit Paradise, therein dwelling forever, those who give what they give, while their hearts quake, that they are returning to their Lord, those who vie in good works, outracing to them!

* O God, bless Muhammad and his Household in every time, in all moments, and in every state, to the number that Thou hast blessed whomsoever Thou hast blessed and to multiples of all that, through multiples which none can count but Thee! Surely Thou art Accomplisher of what Thou desire.

Imam Khomeini says in the direction of this Prophetic word, "God has invited all people to this feast and Gnostics and friends of God enter that feast and, of course, few persons can be successful.

The Formalities of the Feast

One of the important pivots in this feast is to notice its formalities. If the guests are not familiar with these formalities truly or don't act based on them, they cannot gain the desirable result from this feast. Some of these formalities are as follows:

Abandonment of Lust and Covetous Desires

Following the covetous and carnal desires has been considered as the root and base of all sins and offences in religious teachings.

Although, succeeding in this arena and rescuing from the danger of carnal soul and also ignoring the carnal desires are depended on the tolerance of lots of difficulties in the eranas of life, however they are an accessible fact. Anyway, we should move in this way and ask for God's help. Fortunately, the month of Ramadan is the most suitable opportunity for the beginning of this fighting. Holy Mohammad says in the final phrase of *Sha`baniye* sermon:

“Devils are in chain and prison. So, you should ask God to help you so that they don't dominate you”. We read in a part of Imam Sajjad's greeting (salam) regarding the month of Ramadan that, “I hail (send greeting) you who is considered as a friend that assisted us to overcome devil and simplified good ways for us.”

Entering the Month of Feast

Most people are ignorant of the blessings which God has bestowed upon them. So, they don't use them truly. God remembers these groups as the “ungrateful” and “infidels”. Those who behave in this way notice its greatness after this favor has been destroyed and regret its loss that feeling sorry is of no use anymore.

Undoubtedly, one of the most superior blessing that God has bestowed to humanity is invitation to divine feast in Ramadan that most people are ignorant of its greatness and don't have any recognition and perception towards it. Only the infallible Imams are aware of it and thank God and request God to give them the good luck of its recognition.

We read in a phrase of the valediction prayer of Imam Sajjad (PBUH) regarding Ramadan that He said,



“It is right to worship God who put one of the ways of His paradise as His month, the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting, the month of Islam, the month of purification... O my God! Peace be upon Holy Mohammad and His family and inspire us the success of the recognition of the virtue of this month and commemoration of its respect and honoring.”

We read in Imam Sadeq biography that he used to say at the threshold of Ramadan, O my God! The holy month of Ramadan that Quran was reveled in it, arrived.

The late Sheikh Ja`far Shooshtari after the narration of this word of Imam Sadeq says:

“Imam Sadeq (PBUH) doesn't want to inform God that the month of Ramadan has arrived; of course, he wants to say; “O my God! I have been informed about the entrance of holy month of Ramadan. Say, “O my God! I have been informed that the month of Ramadan has been arrived.”

Thanks Giving due to the Comprehension of This Month

The feature of being thankful is approved by Quran and religious leaders. Thankful persons have been remembered as the good ones.

So, it is necessary for those ones who have been invited to divine feast to follow and intimate the role models such as the Prophet and Imams after the sunrise of Ramadan. Also, they should move towards the Exalted God and thank Him because of granting this great blessing to them.

Imam Sajjad (PBUH) says at the time of saying goodbye to the month of Ramadan, “O God! We are the people of this month that you give us the honor for it and grant us the success of the comprehension of it with virtue while the cruel people are ignorant of the valuable time of it and they are not benefited by its grace due to their cruelty.”



Observing the Reverence of This Month

In some narrations, we read that the punishment and retribution of some sins are aggravated in the month of Ramadan due to disregarding its reverence, so all people have to maintain its reverence and try in order to perform its right.

Imam Sajjad (PBUH) says, “And, it is necessary for us to maintain the promise, observe the suitable respect and preserve its right.”

Undoubtedly, observing the reverence of this month will lead to felicity and bliss as Imam Sajjad (PBUH) addressed Ramadan and said, “How lucky is a person who respects you for your sake.”