

Chapter on the fasting of Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam

The nafl saum (fast) of Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam is discussed here. It was the noble practice of Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam to observe many siyaam (fasts). At times he continually observed fasts for many days. The virtues of fasting have been mentioned in many kitaabs. In every command of Allah there are thousands of benefits and wisdom. The human mind and lofty thinking cannot reach the wisdom of the All Wise Allah. Every person can grasp the deeni and duniyawi (worldly) benefits of Allah's commands only till where it can think loftily. The wisdom of Allah is much higher than this. In the manner that all other commandments are filled with thousands of benefits, likewise is the saum, a few of its benefits are apparent and self-evident, one of which is beneficence and sympathy. One who remains hungry, can feel what a hungry person experiences. The difficulties the hungry confront. In such a state one creates a passion to help the hungry, and the feeling to help the poor is also sensed. More than this, it subdues one's animalistic passions and urges. Many a time when these tendencies irritate a human, it results in degrading a human religiously as well as materially. Maulana Rumi explains this in the following couplets:

'This love which the people have today, is not the love which good people have. This is a mischief to fill the stomach. When the stomach is filled, then unlawful deeds come to mind. And when the stomach is empty and full of hunger, then love and its kind are all forgotten.'

Therefore it is stated in the hadith: "The one who cannot get married, should observe many fasts, for this will subdue his carnal passions". A major benefit of saum is the great spiritual strength that is derived from it. For this reason, in every religion and society there was a form of saum. From among the truthful religions, since the time of Sayyidina Aadam 'Alayhis Salaam, saum has been prescribed. The practices of the Ambiyaa 'Alayhimus Salaam were different in this matter. Sayyidina Nuh 'Alayhis Salaam, always fasted for twelve months. The practice of Sayyidina Daawud 'Alayhis Salaam was to fast every alternate day. Sayyidina 'Eesa 'Alayhis Salaam fasted every third day. In the same manner the Ambiyaa 'Alayhimus Salaam had different practices. The practice of Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam was unique in this respect. Due to periodical benefits, it was his practice to fast on special and fixed days. Besides this, at times for timely benefits he continuously fasted, and at times did not fast. The reason is clear, that when saum is observed as an antidote or a medical cure the timely benefits, it will be necessary as is the principle of medicine to use less or more. The author has given a few examples of the practices of Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam.

(281) Hadith Number 1.

'Abdullah bin Shaqeeq Radhiyallahu 'Anhu reports: "I inquired from 'Aayeshah Radhiyallahu 'Anha regarding the (nafil) saum of Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam. She replied: 'At times Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fasted continuously. We used to say, he will keep on fasting (this month). At times he did not fast, till we began thinking he will not fast (that month). Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam did not fast for a month after he came to Madinah, besides the fasts of Ramadhaan". (In this manner, the passing of the whole month without fasting was not observed. As mentioned in Abu Daawud. This practice of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam will be mentioned in the commentary of hadith number three in detail).

(282) Hadith Number 2.

Anas Radiyallahu 'Anhu reports: "Someone was asked about the saum of Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam? He replied: 'It was his noble habit to fast on different occasions. In some months he fasted for so many days, that it was thought he would continue fasting. In other months he did not fast, we thought he would not fast now. It was also from his noble habits that if one wanted to observe Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam performed salaah at night, it was possible, and if one wanted to observe Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam sleep at night, this too was possible".

Commentary

The object here is that the noble habit of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam was not to sleep the whole night, neither to remain awake the full night, but adopt a middle course, wherein the rights of the nafs were considered, and also the 'ibaadaat were given its full importance.

Therefore it was possible to observe his sleep at night as he retired for a portion of the night, and also observed the salaah, as part of the night was devoted to prayers. Some of the 'ulama have given another explanation to this, that the noble habit of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam varied in this respect. At times he performed the nawaafil in the first portion of the night. Sometimes in the middle portion of the night. At times in the last portion of the night. Therefore, if one wanted to observe sleep or salaah at a special time of the night, this too was possible. If one feels that one would like to observe the salaah of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam at a certain part of the night, then this opportunity could also be obtained, and if one wished to observe the sleep at this time an opportunity could also be obtained at some time. Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam would rotate the time spent in prayer to every portion of the night on different days. We understand two benefits of this. The first is that the main object is worship, and man was created for this reason, resulting in attaining the pleasure of Allah. On every portion of the night, at one time or another, the blessings will be obtained. The second is, that when 'ibaadah (devotion) is confined to an appointed time, it becomes a sort of habit, then the taste and pleasantness of hardship does not remain. When 'ibaadah is performed at

different times of the night it will not become a habit.

(283) Hadith Number 3.

Ibn 'Abbaas Radiyallahu 'Anhu relates: "Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fasted the major portion of the month at times, till we thought that he did not intend ending the fasts. In some months he did not fast, we began to think he would not fast now. Besides Ramadaan he did not fast for a full month".

Commentary

The practice of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam has been mentioned in many narrations. There are two reasons for this. The first one has already been mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, that in reality saum is an antidote, and at times it is a medicine for spiritual fulfillment and other benefits. In this manner according to the general rules of medicine, at times it is necessary to use medicine continuously, and at times there is no need for it, or if it is casually needed, then due to some timely obstacles it is necessary to abstain from it. This is common among physicians. Who can reach the state of a spiritual doctor more than Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi wasallam, therefore, Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam many a time fasted continuously for some timely necessities, and at times did not fast. The spiritual doctors of the ummah, may determine for the sake of spiritual benefit, when should one fast and when should one not fast. Those who are not spiritual doctors themselves, should consult those who are and benefit from them. The second reason is this that Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam has a few special practices. For example, the fasting on the days of Monday and Thursday; three days in every month; the ayyamul beed (i.e. the 13th 14th 15th day of the Islaamic lunar month); tenth of Muharram and the tenth of Dhul Hijjah etc. Many times because of being on a journey, or due to some obstacles these fasts were not kept. When the obstacles were overcome he kept these missed fast as qadaa, and also to complete his special practices. It was also from the special habit of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam that whenever he began a devotion he continually kept up the practice. Therefore whenever any fast were missed from his special practices, he completed them by observing continuous fasts. O Allah grant us the strength to follow his noble path.

(284) Hadith Number 4.

Ummi Salaah Radiyallahu 'Anha reports: "I did not observe Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fast for two consecutive months, besides the month of Sha'baan and Ramadhaan".

Commentary

Apparently this hadith seems to contradict all the previous ahaadith. Till now all the ahaadith were unanimous that besides Ramadhaan Sayyidina Rasulallah

Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam did not fast for a complete month. In this hadith the month of Sha'baan has also been added. The 'ulama have reconciled both in many ways . The first is that in this hadith the whole of Sha'baan is mentioned as an exaggeration. The noble habit of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam was to fast for most part of the month. This has accordingly been made clear in a hadith from Sayyiditina Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha which will be mentioned in the ensuing hadith. The second is that it may be possible, at some time Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam by chance kept fast for the whole month of Sha'baan, the news of which reached Sayyiditina Ummi Salamah Radiyallahu 'Anha and did not reach the others. The third is that in the narrations of Sayyiditina Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha, Sayyidina Ibn Abbas Radiyallahu 'Anhu, and others, the habit of doing so is denied, that Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam did not fast for consecutive days in any month besides that of Ramadhaan. It will not contradict this statement if by chance fasts are kept for the full period of any other month. Therefore if for some reason Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fasted for the whole month of Sha'baan in some year, -and since this was not his normal practice, -for this reason Sayyiditina 'Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha and others did not mention it, and Sayyiditina Ummi Salamah Radiyallahu 'Anha mentioned he did, because he fasted for the whole month. There is no contradiction here. The fourth explanation is that in the beginning Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fasted for the whole month of Sha'baan and in the later years because of weakness, lessened the amount of days. Therefore, whoever mentions the later deeds, said this because it was towards the end, and said he fasted for most of the month. The one that thought that this was because of some reason or obstacle, says the original practice was to fast for the whole month. Some are of the opinion that it is the opposite, in the beginning he fasted for most of the month and in later days he began fasting for the full month.

(285) Hadith Number 5.

"Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha says: "I did not observe Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fast for more days in any month (excluding Ramadaan) other than Sha'baan. He fasted for the major part of the month, and nearly fasted for the full month".

Commentary

This goes a bit further where Sayyiditina 'Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha clearly mentions the fasting of the full month of Sha'baan, by this, an exaggeration is indicated. The reason for fasting the major portion of Sha'baan is mentioned by Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam himself that, 'In this month, there is also that day wherein the deeds of the year are presented before Allah. I love that my deeds should be presented whilst I am fasting'. Besides this many other reasons are narrated in the ahaadith. It is possible that at a certain time it is

for a particular reason and at another time it is for some other reason. The combining of many reasons at one time has also been mentioned by Sayyidatina 'Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha, that the Practice of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam was to fast for three days in every month. At times, due to unforeseen circumstances these were not observed. The total qadaa (of missed fasts) were combined and kept in Sha'baan by Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam. In another narration it is mentioned that it was the practice of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam to fast on every Monday and Thursday. In this manner during the course of the year, due to circumstances the fasts of two or three months could not be observed. It could be possible for these to add up to a full month. In one narration it has been stated that because of the sanctity and greatness of Ramadaan the fasts of Sha'baan are meritorious. i.e. In the manner that sunan are performed before the fard salaah, likewise there are nafl fasts before Ramadaan. Weakness due to fasting did not affect Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam, therefore at times he fasted for consecutive days. It is stated in the hadith that Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam was once asked the reason for fasting so many days of Sha'baan. He replied: 'The names of all those who are going to die during the course of the year, are written down in this month. I desire that my death be written in a state when I am fasting'. Some of the 'ulama have written that it was a special practice of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam to observe nafl saum in every month, and there was no way to observe nafl saum in the month of Ramadaan, therefore those nafl portions of Ramadaan were kept in advance in the month of Sha'baan. For this reason if the fasts of both Sha'baan and Ramadaan are combined, it will cover most of the month.

(286) Hadith Number 6.

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud Radiyallahu 'Anhu reports: "Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fasted for three days at the beginning of every month, and he very seldom did not fast on Friday".

Commentary

One has been persuaded in many ahaadith to observe saum for three days in every month. The thawaab (reward) for every good deed is tenfold, therefore the fasting of three days will add up to the thawaab of thirty days. In this manner it will be as if one has fasted for one's whole life. Many ahaadith have been mentioned regarding the fixing of the three days. There are no differences in this. At times on every Monday and Thursday. Sometimes on the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth. In the same way he fasted at other times too. It is mentioned in an ensuing hadith by Sayyidatina 'Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha that Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam did not fix special days for fasting. Sayyidina Ibn 'Abbaas Radiyallahu 'Anhu says: 'Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam did not omit the fasting of the ayyaami beed (13th, 14th and 15th day of the Islaamic lunar month) at home or while on his travels'. The second point in the

above hadith is the fasting on Fridays. From this hadith it is found that the fast of Fridays were given importance, but in another hadith it has been prohibited to fast on Friday only. For this reason some of the 'ulama, due to the above hadith are of the opinion that it is mustahab to fast on Friday and some 'ulama due to the hadith wherein it has been prohibited, are of the opinion that it is makruh to fast on Friday only. The Hanafis hold both opinions.

(287) Hadith Number 7

Aayeshah Radhiyallahu anha reports: "Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wasallam (often) gave importance to the fasting on Mondays and Thursdays"

Commentary

In some narrations the reason for giving importance to these days are mentioned. One reason will be mentioned in a hadith of Sayidina Abu Hurayrah Radhiyallahu anhu which follows in this chapter, that deeds are presented on these days. In a narration in Sahih Muslim regarding Monday, it has been stated that "I was born on a Monday, the revealing of the Quran to me also began on a Monday". In one hadith it stated that "Allah Ta'alah forgives the sins of every Muslim (provided the rules apply) on Mondays and Thursdays". It is said regarding those two people who are on bad terms "hold the granting of their forgiveness till they reconcile among themselves".

(288) Hadith Number 8

Abu Hurayrah Radhiyallahu anhu says: "Rasulullah sallallahu alayhi wasallam said: 'Deeds are presented (before Allah subhanahu wata'allah) on Mondays and Thursdays. I desire that my deeds be presented whilst I am fasting'".

Commentary

Making it possible for these to be easily accepted. The question may arise regarding the presenting of deeds. The gist of a hadeeth mentioned in Sahih Muslim show that deeds are presented daily in the morning and evenings. What is meant by the deeds being presented on Mondays and Thursday? The Muhaditheen sum both up in different ways. The easiest is that the deeds of the day and night are presented in details twice a day. The deeds of the night separately and the ones of the day separately. On Mondays and Thursdays they are presented briefly. The deeds of the whole year are summed up in Sha'baan and Laylatul Qadar and presented before Allah the Almighty. One benefit among the many benefits of presenting the deeds repeatedly are that the honour of the pious are made evident before the angels. The angels raised a question when Allah Ta'aala created humans, that 'You are creating such a being that will spread bloodshed and turmoil in the world'. Allah Ta'aala knows at every moment the deeds committed by every person, therefore it is not necessary that deeds be presented to Him.

(289) Hadith Number 9.

'Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha reports: "Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fasted three days of every month. In some months he fasted on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays, and in some months he fasted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays".

Commentary

So that in this manner all the days of the week are covered. The days of Friday were intentionally omitted as stated in some ahaadith that this day had been proclaimed as an 'Eid. Other important matters were fulfilled on this day. Or Friday has not been mentioned in this narration and may have been mentioned in other narrations.

(290) Hadith Number 10.

'Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha reports: "Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam did not fast in any month more than in the month of Sha'baan".

Commentary

This has already been explained in detail.

(291) Hadith Number 11.

Mu'aadhah Radiyallahu 'Anha says. "I inquired from 'Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha, did Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fast for three days of every month?" She replied: "Yes". I then asked: "On which days of the month did he fast". She replied. "He did not fast on specific days, but whenever suitable".

Commentary

At certain times it was the practice of Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam not to give importance to fixing certain days. At times he fixed certain days. For example, fasting on the first three days of the month, or sometimes on the last three days of the month, or in some months on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, and in another month on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Therefore different ahaadith have been narrated on this subject, and Sayyiditina 'Aayeshah ,Radhiyallahu 'Anha refused to specify a certain day.

(292) Hadith Number 12.

Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha reports: "The Quraysh observed the fast of 'Aa-shura in the days of jaahiliyyah (pre-Islamic period of ignorance). Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam also observed this fast (before the hijrah as a nafl). (After the hijrah) when he came to Madinah Munawwarah he observed these and commanded the ummah also to observe it. When the command to fast in Ramadaan was

revealed, it was proclaimed fard, and the fast of 'Aa-shura became nafl. Those who wished, observed them ('Aa-shura) and those who did not, omitted them.

Commentary

Many narrations have been narrated on the virtues of the saum (fast) of 'Aa-shura. It is stated in a narration in Sahih Muslim that by observing the saum of 'Arafah the sins of two years are forgiven, and by observing the fast of 'Aa-shura the sins of one year are forgiven. Some commentators write that on the day of 'Aa-shura, the taubah (repentance) of Sayyidina Adam 'Alayhis Salaam was accepted; The boat of Sayyidina Nuh 'Alayhis Salaam docked (after the great floods); Sayyidina Musa 'Alayhis Salaam was saved from Firown, and Firown drowned on this day; Sayyidina 'Eesa 'Alayhis Salaam was born, and raised to the heavens on this day; On this day Sayyidina Yunus 'Alayhis Salaam was freed from the stomach of the fish, and his ummah forgiven; On this day Sayyidina Yusuf 'Alayhis Salaam was taken out of the well; On this day Sayyidina Ayyub 'Alayhis Salaam was cured from his illness; On this day Sayyidina Idriss 'Alayhis Salaam was raised to the sky; On this day Sayyidina Ebrahim 'Alayhis Salaam was born; On this day Sayyidina Sulaymaan 'Alayhis Salaam was given the powers to rule a country; Besides these many other karaamaat (miracles) are mentioned in the commentaries of the ahaadith and books on seerah. Although according to the muhadditheen many questions have been raised on these incidents, there are numerous miracles that have been ascertained. It is said that the wild animals also fast on this day. Allahu Akbar! What a blessed day this is? Yet we waste it in amusements and useless pastimes. Probably it is from among these reasons that, the virtues of this day was well known in the days of jaahiliyyah. Therefore the Quraysh must have observed this fast before the advent of Islaam. When Sayidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam came to Madinah Munawwarah, he observed that the Jews, who are from the Ahlul-Kitaab, also observing the fast of Aa-shurah. Sayidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam inquired from them the reason for fasting on this day. They replied: 'Allah Ta'alah saved Musa Alayhis salaam on this day from the oppression of Firown (Pharaoh) and also Firown was drowned on this day. In gratitude and happiness Musa Alayhis salaam fasted on this day'. Sayidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam replied: "We are more entitled than you to follow Musa Alayhis Salaam". Therefore, Sayidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam himself fasted on this day and commanded the Ummah also to fast on this day. This incident is mentioned in the Sahih Muslim. For this reason the Hanafis say this saum (fast) was fard before the command of Ramadhaan was revealed. When the fast of Ramadhaan was ordained these were abrogated. Its merits and the virtues for the forgiveness of one years sins still remain.

MAS-ALAH: The original day for the observance of the fast of Aa-shurah is the tenth. In the early periods of Islaam, Sayidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam was in agreement with the ahlul-kitaab, as their belief was also from the heavenly revealed religions, and was better than the religion of the mushriqeen, but in the later years the ahlul-kitaab were also opposed in words and deeds, which

was necessary due to many factors. Once a sahabi brought this to the notice of Sayidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam were upon he replied: "If I remain alive next year I will surely fast on the ninth next year". In another narration it is stated: "Oppose the Jews, observe the fast of the ninth or eleventh" i.e. add a fast to that of the tenth. With this no resemblance or imitation will remain. Therefore, it is advisable not to observe the fast of the tenth only, it is preferable that the fast of the ninth be also added to it, so that one will be fulfilling the commands of both hadith. If the ninth could not be observed then the eleventh should be added.

(293) Hadith Number 13.

'Alqamah Radhiyallahu anhu relates: "I asked Aayeshah Radhiyallahu anha: 'Did Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam fix a day for 'Ibaadah? She replied: 'The practices of Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam was of a continuous nature. Who among you have the strength, which Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam had?' "

Commentary

That meant to set aside a day for some special devotion. For example, to specify Monday for fasting. Fast is observed on every Monday and nothing is ever eaten on this day. Or besides Monday, fast are not observed on other days. Both these were not found, but it was certainly the practice of Sayidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam that, whatever deed he began observing, he punctually continued its practice. You do not possess the strength and cannot fulfil these with such punctuality as that of Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam'. He punctually completed his prescribed practices. If for any reason it could not be fulfilled, he completed it at a later time, as has been mentioned in the fasts of Sha'baan. The gist of this is, that it was not given such importance that, the deed was observed only on a particular day, and no other deed was observed on that day. He certainly fulfilled his prescribed practices with care among which are included the fasting on special days. No doubt remains on this commentary, that Sayyiditina 'Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha, has mentioned in hadith number eight, that special attention was given to the fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. The findings of Haafizul Hadith (one who has memorised a minimum of 100 000 ahaadith with its chain of narrators), Ibn Hajar RA is that this question and answer is regarding these three fasts, it was the practice of Sayyidina Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam to observe these fasts every month. This has already been mentioned in hadith number seven. According to this explanation there is no confusion.

(294) Hadith Number 14.

'Aayeshah Radiyallahu 'Anha says: "Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam once came home, a woman was present at that time. Rasulallah Sallallahu 'Alayhi

Wasallam inquired. 'Who is this woman?' I replied: 'This is a certain woman who does not sleep at night'. Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam said: 'One should observe only that amount of nawaafil which one can bear. I swear an oath that Allah Ta'aala does not fear the granting of rewards, till you begin to fear the observance of deeds'. 'Aayeshah Radiyallahu. 'Anha says: 'The most beloved deed of Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam were those that were practised continuously.

Commentary

This Sahaabiyyah was Sayyidatina Kholaa bint Tuwayt bin Habib Radiyallahu 'Anha. She had the fervour and intense desire to perform 'ibaadah. Many incidents of this type are mentioned in the ahaadith, Where the zeal of the Sahaabah Radiyallahu 'Anhu was so intense, it compelled them to perform 'ibaadah more than normal. Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam advised them to observe moderation. Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin 'Amr ibnul 'Aas Radiyallahu 'Anhu, a famous Sahaabi says: "I once made up my mind, that I would strive to intensify my devotions. I would always fast during the day. I would complete the recitation of the whole Quran (khatm) every night. My father got me married to a honourable woman. Once my father inquired from my wife about my state of affairs? She replied: 'He is very pious man, he does not come to bed the whole night. He does not have anything to do with anyone'. My father became very angry with me, that I had got you married to an honourable woman, and you have left her hanging. Due to my intense desire for devotions this did not effect me. My father complained to Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam about my state of affairs. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam asked me: 'I have heard you always fast during the day, and stand in prayer the whole night?' I replied: 'yes'. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said: 'Do not do so, but fast sometimes, and abstain sometimes. In the same manner do perform salaah at night, and sleep too. Your body also has a right on you. Your eyes also have a right on you, it will become weak due to staying awake the whole night. Your wife also has a right on you. Your children also have a right on you. Those who meet you also have a right on you".

(295) Hadith Number 15

Abu Salih R.A. reports "I enquired from Aayeshah and Umme Salamah Radhiyallahu anhumah that which act was the most beloved by Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam?" Both gave the reply "That deed which was practised continuously, even if it was a little".

Commentary

The object of all these ahadeeth are that saum, and likewise all other nafl deeds, even if it be a little, or whatever could be done should be practised continuously and with care. One should not forsake these with the thought that it cannot be practised constantly because the nawafil are the only acts that compensate the short comings of the faraa'id (compulsory act). Therefore one should endeavour to

observe and practise as much as one possible can.

(296) Hadith Number 16

Awf bin Malik Radhiyallahu anhu says: "I spent a night with Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam. Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam used the miswaak (cleaned the teeth), then performed the wudhu, then stood up in salaah. I stood with him (joined him). He began reciting the Surah Baqarah. Whenever he came across an aayah of mercy, he paused and beseeched Allah of His Mercy. In the same manner when he came across an aayah of adhaab (punishment), he paused and beseeched Allah for His forgiveness from adhaab. He then performed ruku', and remained in the ruku for as long as he had spent in the standing posture. He recited in the ruku':

Subhaana dhil jabaruti wal-malakuti wal-kibri-yaa-i wal-'a-za-mati

Translation: Glory be to the Lord of the Might, the Dominion, the Majesty, and the Magnificence.

Thereafter he performed the sajdah, which was as long as the ruku and recited the same du'aa in the sajdah. He then recited the Surah Aali Imraan (in the second rakah), thereafter one surah (in each rakah) and did the same".

Commentary

How lengthy these rak'ahs must have been, is evident from the saying (of the above narration). The Surah Baqarah covers about two and half Juz, and then sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi wasallam recited with care, every word was recited clearly and distinctly. A pause was with made at every aayah where mercy and punishment are mentioned du'aa was made. Thereafter a long ruku', the same length as that of the standing was performed and likewise was the sajdah. This is one rakah. In this manner it will be difficult to complete four rak'ahs in the whole night. But due to the intense desire and zeal, especially for such a noble personality, whose coolness of the eye was in salaah, such a deed was not difficult. Apparently the last few ahaadith have no relation with the subject on the fasting of Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam. In (some) editions of the Shamaa-il these are included not only in the chapter on salaatud duha, saum etc., but in every chapter on the devotions of Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam. There is no perplexity in this, but in those editions where these different chapters exist, a minute point is derived, that generally those who have a strong zeal for fasting, it is observed that, they begin to exert themselves so much that they tend to become lax in the rights of others. For this reason, Imaam Tirmidhi has in the beginning mentioned the ahaadith on moderation, and in the end has indicated that when in zeal one sometimes exceeds one's normal practice, there is no harm. It must not be of such a nature that an indifference and weariness for 'Ibaadah (devotions) is created as a result of this.