

## Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: IT IS lawful for you to go in unto your wives during the night preceding the [day's] fast: they are as a garment for you, and you are as a garment for them. God is aware that you would have deprived yourselves of this right,<sup>159</sup> and so He has turned unto you in His mercy and removed this hardship from you. Now, then, you may lie with them skin to skin, and avail yourselves of that which God has ordained for you,<sup>160</sup> and eat and drink until you can discern the white streak of dawn against the blackness of night,<sup>161</sup> and then resume fasting until nightfall; but do not lie with them skin to skin when you are about to abide in meditation in houses of worship.<sup>162</sup> These are the bounds set by God: do not, then, offend against them - [for] it is thus that God makes clear His messages unto mankind, so that they might remain conscious of Him.

Malik: It is made lawful for you to approach your wives during the night of the fast; they are an apparel for you and you for them. Allah knows that you were committing dishonesty to your souls. So He has relented towards you and pardoned you. Now, you may approach your wives and seek what Allah has written for you. Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread of night, then complete your fast till nightfall. Do not approach your wives during l'htikaf (retreat in the mosques in last ten days of Ramadhan). These are the limits set by Allah: do not ever violate them. Thus Allah makes His revelations clear to mankind so that they may guard themselves against evil.

Mustafa Khattab:

It has been made permissible for you to be intimate with your wives during the nights preceding the fast. Your spouses are a garment<sup>1</sup>

for you as you are for them. Allah knows that you were deceiving yourselves.<sup>2</sup> So He has accepted your repentance and pardoned you. So now you may be intimate with them and seek what Allah has prescribed for you.<sup>3</sup>

?You may? eat and drink until you see the light of dawn breaking the darkness of night, then complete the fast until nightfall. Do not be intimate with your spouses while you are meditating in the mosques. These are the limits set by Allah, so do not exceed them. This is how Allah makes His revelations clear to people, so they may become mindful ?of Him?.

Pickthall: It is made lawful for you to go unto your wives on the night of the fast. They are raiment for you and ye are raiment for them. Allah is aware that ye were deceiving yourselves in this respect and He hath turned in mercy toward you and relieved you. So hold intercourse with them and seek that which Allah hath ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall and touch them not, but be at your devotions in the mosques. These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus Allah expoundeth His revelations to mankind that they may ward off (evil).

Yusuf Ali: Permitted to you on the night of the fasts is the approach to your wives. They are your garments. And ye are their garments. Allah knoweth what ye used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you; so now associate with them and seek what Allah hath ordained for you and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are limits (set by) Allah; approach not nigh thereto. Thus doth Allah make clear His signs to men that they may learn self-restraint. <sup>195 196 197 198 199 200</sup>

Transliteration: Ohilla lakum laylata alssiyami alrrafathu ila nisaikum hunna libasun lakum waantum libasun lahunna AAalima Allhu annakum kuntum takhtanoona anfusakum fataba AAalaykum waAAafa AAankum faalana bashiroohunna waibtaghoo ma kataba Allhu lakum wakuloo waishraboo hatta yatabayyana lakumu alkhaytu alabyadu mina alkhayti alaswadi mina alfajri thumma atimmoo alssiyama ila allayli wala tubashiroohunna waantum AAakifoona fee almasajidi tilka hudoodu Allhi fala taqrabooha

kathalika yubayyinu Allahu ayatihi liInnasi laAAallahum yattaqoona

## Author Comments

159 - Lit., "deceived" of "defrauded yourselves [in this respect]": an allusion to the idea prevalent among the early Muslims, before the revelation of this verse, that during the period of fasting all sexual intercourse should be avoided, even at night-time, when eating and drinking are allowed (Razi). The above verse removed this misconception.

160 - Lit., "and seek that which God has ordained for you": an obvious stress on the God-willed nature of sexual life.

161 - Lit., "the white line of dawn from the black line [of night]". According to all Arab philologists, the "black line" (al-khayt al-aswad) signifies "the blackness of night" (Lane II, 831); and the expression al-khaytan ("the two lines" or "streaks") denotes "day and night" (Lisan al-'Arab).

162 - It was the practice of the Prophet to spend several days and nights during Ramadan - and occasionally also at other times - in the mosque, devoting himself to prayer and meditation to the exclusion of all worldly activities; and since he advised his followers as well to do this from time to time, seclusion in a mosque for the sake of meditation, called i'tikaf, has become a recognized - though optional - mode of devotion among Muslims, especially during the last ten days of Ramadan.

28896 -

"Garment" (libâs) is a metaphor for comfort, chastity, and protection.

28897 -

Initially, intimate relations during the night of Rama?ân were not permissible. Since some Muslims could not resist not having intercourse with their spouses, this verse was revealed allowing intimacy during the nights preceding the fast.

28898 -

This implies offspring.

195 - Men and women are each other's garments: i.e., they are for mutual support, mutual comfort, and mutual protection, fitting into each other as a garment fits the body. A garment also is both for show and concealment. The question of sex is always delicate to handle: here we are told that even in such matters a clear, open, and honest course is better than fraud or self-deception. The sex instinct is classed with eating and drinking, an animal thing to be restrained, but not to be ashamed of. The three things are prohibited during the fast by day, but permitted after the fast is broken at night till the next fast commences.

196 - There is difference of opinion as to the exact meaning of this. I would connect this as a parallel clause with the clause "eat and drink", which follows, all three being governed by "until the white thread", etc. That is, all three things must stop when the fast begins again in the early morning. Or it may mean: What is permitted is well enough, but seek the higher things ordained for you.

197 - Those in touch with Nature know the beautiful effects of early dawn. First appear thin white indefinable streaks of light in the east; then a dark zone supervenes; followed by a beautiful pinkish white zone clearly defined from the dark. This is the true dawn; after that the fast begins.

198 - Till the night appears: From the actual practice of the Holy Apostle, this is rightly interpreted to mean: "Till sunset."

199 - Retreat to the Mosques by night after the fast is broken is specially recommended towards the end of Ramadham, so that all carnal temptations may be avoided.

200 - I construe these limits as applying to the whole of the regulations about fasts.

[View Page](#)

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