

Fasting and Soul Purification

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All thanks be to Allah who opened the gates of paradise during the month of Ramadan, and made fasting Ramadan a protection from hellfire. And I testify that there is no God other than Allah, who has no partners. He made the day of Ramadan better through fasting and its night better through prayers accustomed by the messenger (ppbu). And I testify that Muhammad is the slave and messenger of Allah, and that Allah selected him amongst all His creation and that he is His beloved. Peace and prayers be upon him, his family, his companions and those who follow his guidance to the last day.

Slaves of Allah, One of the most majestic obligations decreed in Islam is the task of fasting which is one of the pillars of Islam. And it is one of greater support for faith which brings a slave closer to his Lord. Fasting is a mean of training for the soul. Fasting stops the soul and prevents it from transgression and violation and wrong doing and controls its desires. Fasting makes clear the real and urgent need for food which is one of the mercies of Allah upon the soul. So, it succumbs and submits to Allah the Lord of the worlds. The scholar Ahmad Showkey said: **"Fasting is a lawful deprivation, and is discipline through hunger, and submission and surrender to Allah. Behind every imposed obligation there is a reason or wisdom, and the wisdom behind fasting on the outside seems like punishment and on the inside it is mercy, it arouses kindness, and motivates towards donation and charity, and it breaks the sense of vanity and superiority, fasting teaches patience. Fasting teaches good habits of kindness. Such this who is accustomed to plenty of food if he or she goes hungry, and this who is accustomed to plenty of pleasures, if he or she is**

denied the resource of fulfillment, then such a person will know the true feeling of poverty when it strikes and will know the true pain of hunger when it stings"

Yes, Fasting is a lawful deprivation. It is a deprivation for the individual even from the good lawful things. But it is lawful because it is an implementation and adherence to a commandment of Allah. This denial starts at dawn and ends at sunset. Fasting is a discipline through hunger. A discipline for the soul to know the value of Allah's mercy upon it. And to know its need for food which is one of Allah's mercies. And so the human being will realize and know despite how much power he has, still remains weak when it comes to the power of Allah. Allah says in the Koran: **{and Man was created weak}**. The human nature tends towards relaxation and idleness. And it tends towards more food and drink. It failed to realize that plenty of food is like poison. And did not understand when the messenger of Allah (ppbu) said: **{son of Adam would not do worst in filling anything more than filling his stomach}**

Brother in Islam, imposing every obligation has its reason or wisdom. Fasting having what seems to be punishment on the outside yet it has mercy on the inside. This who fasts is like an angel who would instigate kindness and would encourage giving. It has the spirit of social unity and social cooperation which is called for by all nations and societies, and which Islam called for over fourteen hundred years ago. Fasting encourages and promotes kindness, cooperation, friendship and goodwill amongst members of the Muslim society. This will help make it a coherent and cooperating society. Allah says: **{and do cooperate in kindness and piety and do not cooperate in sin, crime and aggression}**. The messenger (ppbu) said: **{an example of the believers in care, kindness and mercy which they show each other is like the single body. If one of its parts or organs suffers, the rest**

of the organs attend to it through fever and agitation and loss of sleep}

"Fasting breaks that ego, vanity and superiority". Fasting calls and encourages the rich to donate to the poor and the destitute. A Muslim who lives in comfort when he or she fasts they will feel the pain of hunger and thirst during Ramadan. They will better know how the poor, the orphan and the destitute feel, and will better know their need to food, such that the rich will willingly and generously donate to the poor.

Prophet Yousif (pbu) used to continually fast every other day, that is fast one day and eat the next day. When he was asked why, he said: **"I am afraid to feel full then I would forget the one who is hungry"**.

The status of fasting and its sanctity is so great that Allah made it an atonement or penance for many sins and acts of disobedience that are committed by the slaves. Fasting is made penance for whoever intentionally eats or breaks fasting in the day of Ramadan. And it is a penance for the wrongful killing or manslaughter. Fasting is also a penance for breaking an oath, or making the oath which one would prohibit his own wife to himself (known as *thihar* الظهار). Fasting has the power which causes forgiveness of sins and misdeeds. The messenger (ppbu) said: **{whosoever fasts Ramadan in faith and expectation then all his or her previous sins are forgiven}**.

All thanks be to Allah.