

The Virtues of Ramadan

As-salámu ‘alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!”

“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa.

May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”

In the name Of God, Most merciful, Most compassionate.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For this week, I’d like to touch upon some crucial issues in terms of the importance and virtues of Month of Ramadan.

In one of the verses Allah (swt) says: **“O, you who believe fasting is prescribed to you, as it was prescribed to those before you that you may acquire self-restraint.” (Al-Qur’an 2:183)**

Fasting is an eloquent expression of Allah, leading this Ummah to the gates of His mercy, a key to unlocking the mysteries of His nearness. The institution of Fasting is a unique form of worship prescribed as part of an overall system of Islam. Its uniqueness mirrors the uniqueness of the human being, a creature of physical and spiritual parts whose excellence depends on the right proportion of these two parts. Too much of the physical material will ruin man, and too much of the spiritual will, too. Fasting orients the observer to the art of balancing the spiritual essentials with physical needs. This will be needed to help us curb the animalistic tendencies originating from the stomach, in full. It makes us forget about our beginning, it awakens the mind and kindles clear thinking and consciousness of Allah. Fasting is the sobering of a mind and reconstruction of our spiritual faculties.

The Merits of Fasting

Islam is built on five pillars. Each represents a unique utility, an institution, if you will, through which the believer builds his relationship with the Creator and the creation. Of all the pillars of Islam, none is more special than siyaam, fasting. While there may be an appearance of Riya, eye service, or show, in all other pillars – Salaat, Zakaat, Hajj, and even the Kalimah – there is no such possibility in fasting. The only One who knows that you are really abstaining is Allah, the Almighty. It is easy to pretend to be fasting; while in hiding, you may eat or drink. Thus, fasting is considered a special worship, as Hadith reports from the Messenger of Allah (saas) have detailed.

It has been reported by the way of Abu Hurairah (raa) that the Prophet (saas) reported that Allah (SWT) said in a Hadith Al-Qudsi: **“All services of the son of Adam are for him except fasting. It is for Me, and I will reward him for it. Fasting is a shield. On the day you fast, do not use obscenity, nor yell at others, nor act ignorantly towards them. However, if anyone abuses you**

verbally or attempts to draw you to fight with him, say ‘I am fasting’ two times. The Prophet (saas) then states: I swore by the One (Allah) in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, the breath of the faster is sweeter to Allah on the Day of Judgment than the scent of musk. The faster experiences enjoyment twice: he is pleased when he breaks his fast, and he is pleased when he meets his Maker” (Muslim)

Among the points this incisive hadith revealed is that fasting is Allah’s. Certainly, there is only one reason why a believer will put himself or herself through this trying physical exercise that – to seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT). The fast is the single most important device to test the Iman, faith, of the believer and the depth of his sincerity and commitment to the

The reward for fasting is immense, as mentioned in the following Hadeeth: **“Every action of the son of Adam is given manifold reward, each good deed receiving ten times its like, up to seven hundred times. Allah the Most High said, ‘Except for fasting, for it is for Me and I will give recompense for it, he leaves off his desires and his food for Me.’ for the fasting person there are two times of joy; a time when he breaks his fast and a time of joy when he meets his Lord, and the smell coming from the mouth of the fasting person is better with Allah than the smell of musk.” [al-Bukhaaree]**

In a hadith related by Abdullah Bin Omar, the Prophet said: **“Fasting (Siyaam) and the Book of Allah (Al-Qur’an) will intercede for the servant on the Day of Judgment. The fasting will say: ‘O, Allah, I denied him nourishment and his desires (sex) during the daytime. Let me intercede on his behalf’, and Al-Qur’an will say: ‘I denied him sleep during night time; so let me intercede on his behalf.’ So, Allah will allow them to intercede on his behalf.” (Ahmed)**

This hadith indicates on the Day of Judgment, when the events will be overwhelming and the outcome uncertain, the fast and the Book will intercede for the servants of Allah.

Shal bin Sa’ad reported the Messenger of Allah (saas) said: **“Paradise (Jannah) has a door called Rayyan (the quencher), which is preserved for those who observed fasting on the Day of Judgment. It will be announced, ‘Where are those who observed fasting?’ The door, Rayyan, will not be closed until the last one of them enters.” (Bukhari and Muslim)**

Also, Sahl ibn Sa`d said that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: **“Indeed there is a gate of Paradise called ar-Rayyaan. On the day of Resurrection those who fast will enter through it; no one enters it except for them, and when they have entered, it is closed so that no one enters it, so when the last of them enters it, it is closed, and whoever enters it drinks, and whoever drinks never becomes thirsty.” [Ibn Khuzaimah, Saheeh].**

This is what the pleasure of Allah is all about. The person who observes fasting becomes an elite in the hour that every other person is busy turning the pages of their books of deeds. This is the time you are pulled away through the Rayyan Gate to Paradise.

Abu Sa’eed Al-Khudree related the Messenger of Allah (saas) said: **“If a servant of Allah fasts a day for the pleasure of Allah (SWT), He will distance his face**

from the hellfire, in the equivalent of that day, which, in the sight of Allah, will take seventy years to cover.” (Bukhari/Muslim)

The fasting person will be among the true followers of the prophets and the martyrs: `Amr ibn Murrah al-Juhaanee r.a.a. said: **“A man came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, what if I testify that none has the right to worshipped but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah, and I observe the five daily prayers, and I pay the zakaah, and I fast and stand in prayer in Ramadhan, then amongst whom shall I be?’ He said: ‘Amongst the true followers of the prophets and the martyrs.’ ”** [Ibn Hibbaan, Saheeh]

Fasting is a shield against one’s base desires, as the Prophet (s.a.w.) told the youth: **“O youths, whoever amongst you is able to marry then let him do so, since it restrains the eyes and protects the private parts, and he who is unable, then let him fast because it is a shield for him.”** [al-Bukhaaree, Muslim]

Merits of Ramadan

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Abu Hurairah (raa) relates the Messenger of Allah (saas) said when one Ramadan came: **“A blessed month has arrived. Observing it in fasting is mandated on you (the believers). During this month, the gates of Paradise will be opened and the gates of Hellfire will be closed. The evil ones (Shayaatin) will be handcuffed. In it there is one night, during which worship is better than worship in a thousand months. Whoever is denied its blessings has been denied the biggest blessing.”** (Ahmed, Nasaae, and Bayhaqi)

Allah (SWT) states: **“Ramadan is the month in which was sent down the Qur’an as a guide to humanity and as a clear sign for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So anyone of you who witnesses the month should spend it in fasting...”** (Al-Qur’an, 2:185)

Avoidance of the Things That Contradict the Spirit of Fasting

Fasting is one of the best acts of worship. It is mandated by Allah (SWT) to purify the soul along with the practice of good deeds. Thus the faster ought to be aware of acts or behaviors that may spoil his fast so that he or she will attain the highest benefit physically and spiritually.

Fasting is not only restraining oneself from fast-breakers – food, drink and sex – that restrain only the mouth and the private parts. Every limb (jawarih) must be restrained. The tongue must desist from slander and back-biting. The eyes must restrain themselves from any unlawful look. The hand must not touch or take what does not belong to it. The ears must not listen to idle talk, gossip, lyrics and notes that contain obscene and indecent things; the nose must fast also by not sniffing, smelling unlawful things. The feet must fast by not going to places where sinful acts are propagated. When you eat sahuur and iftar, make sure the food on the table has been obtained lawfully. If the servant has observed the fast in these terms and acted

accordingly, he or she will have gained positively by Ramadan and will receive the maximum reward.

Hence, fasting is a state of mind that transcends the physical restraint. In a hadith by Abu Hurairah, the Messenger of Allah (saas) said: **“It is not fasting, just to restrain from food and drink, instead the fast is to cease from idle talk, obscenity, and should anyone insult or provoke you, or act ignorantly towards you, respond to it by saying, ‘I am fasting, I am indeed fasting.’”** (Ibn Khuzaimah)

In another citation reported by Abu Hurairah (raa) the Messenger of Allah, (saas), said: **“He who does not stop from false talk or stop from acting upon false talk, Allah will have no need that he abstain from his food and drink.”** (Bukhari)

Again, in the same spirit, the Messenger of Allah (saas) said: **“Many an observer of fasting will not receive from his fasting any reward but the pain of hunger, and many a night worshipper will not receive any reward from his prayer but the loss of sleep.”** (Nasaie and Hakim)

These three ahadith are evidence that the most important thing in the eyes of the Lawgiver is not merely physically restraining from the obvious food and drink, but the total commitment of the servant’s body and soul to the letter and spirit of fasting. The curfew of the body and mind during the state of fasting enables the person who has fasted in the true spirit of Ramadan to have the necessary requirements to withstand the turbulence of life for the next eleven months.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May Allah send all His mercy and compassionate during this sacred month.

Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil ‘Aalameen. Was-salaatu was-salaamu alaa Khayril mursaleen. Muhammadin-nabeey-yil Ummiy-yee, wa-‘alaa aalihee, wa sahbihee, aj-ma’een.

Ammaa ba’ad:

Innalláha wa malaaiikata yusallúna alan nabi. Yá ay yuhal latheena ámanu sallú alayhi wasalli mú tas leema. Allahumma salli alá Muhammad, wa ala áli Muhammad, kama salayta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali Ibrahim. Allahumma barik ala Muhammad, wa alaa áli Muhammad, kama barakta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali ibrahim. Fil ála meen, innaka hameedun majeed.”