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RAMAZAN: a month of bountiful blessings

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Ramazan fasting is not merely refraining from eating, and drinking but carries the added significance of worship, psychological comfort, morality, and legislation. It is neither the irrational motionless Imsak of pre-Islamic Arabs nor the mere abstaining from eating and drinking, but is the building of one's character, control over desires, and an inspiration towards social and scientific creativity.

Almight Allah has commanded this sanctified duty and enjoined it on Muslims, as Allah has enjoined it on the believing nations before. Allah assigned the blessed month of Ramazan for every adult and healthy Muslim as a period of fasting. This sacred ordinance was prescribed by Allah for all believers and revealed in the preceding month of Shaubaan nearly a year and a half after the Prophet Muhammad's auspicious migration from Mecca to Medina, Hijra, which marks the start of the Islamic calendar.

Gradually, Allah revealed numerous other verses about the month of Ramazan and the rules of fasting. In light of these divine injunctions, the Prophet (S.A.W.) expounded the merits of fasting, its significance, regulations, effects, benefits and great reward. Hence, fasting is one of the pillars of Islam and a religious duty for all those who believe in Allah.

It is an apparent sign of obedience, submission and servitude to Allah. the Exalted. By fasting, a Muslim expresses his submission to Allah's command, his response to Allah's will, and control over his own desires and wishes of Allah's behest.

In the holy month of Ramazan, a Muslim's abstaining from food, drink sexual desires, etc., during the prescribed hours is the very manifestation of obedience to Allah's will. This self-deprivation represents a state of self-control and of overcoming carnal pleasure, desire, and enjoyment, for the blissful love of Allah, His proximity, and the eagerness to desires. It is a triumph of pristine love over one's pleasures for the eternal ones promised by the Almighty Allah. This response to the Divine commandments represents and incarnates true servitude and is a brilliant display of spirit, intellect and decisive willpower.

By fasting, a person keeps himself from the pleasures of life, with no preventive or hindering factor, except that of obeying Allah and showing genuine devotion to Allah's commands. Traditions explains this fact: A fasting person is in a state of worship, even when asleep, except when the person backbites another Muslim. Fasting is so blessed every breath you take has a reward for you even when you are asleep.

In a moving speech, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) described the believing soul that fasts for love of Allah out of truthfulness and sincerity, and thus the whole day becomes an altar of worship, and each and every activity of the fasting body, provided it abstains from loathsome acts, is nothing but worship embodied.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) described the sleep of a fasting Muslim, even the very breathing, as acts of worship, because they emanate from a body regarded as being in a state of continual worship through abstaining from tasting delicious and lawful things, solely out of obedience to Allah.

The practices of Islamic fasting are designed to divert human mind towards righteousness through a process of self-denials. Fasting constitutes a process of self-purification, self-righteousness, and spiritual development of one's self.

Fasting in Islam is not prescribed to cause undue hardship. The Divine principle, as specified in the Holy Quran Allah places no burden on any soul greater than it can bear.

Accordingly, although there can be no laxity in so far as the obligation of fasting is concerned, there are facilities provided for one who may be sick or on a journey. According to prescribed principles, if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period of fasting should be made up by days later. Hence Islam intends every facility for us, and it does not want to put us to difficulties. So here comes the blessed month of Ramazan providing us these blessed opportunities. Let us all make the best of Ramazan and get its bountiful blessings.

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