

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Blessings of Ramadan

Fasting For Better Soul and Health

Ramadan is the ninth lunar month in the Islamic calendar. The majority of Muslims all over the world fast every day of this month from dawn to the sunset. During fasting, they abstain from eating, drinking and sexual encounter as ordained by God in the Quran (2:187).

There are cases when a person can be excused from fasting. God tells us that He did not reveal the Quran to cause us any hardship (20:2). Therefore, if a person is unable to fast for some reason, God gives him or her other options.

Specific days (are designated for fasting); if one is ill or traveling, an equal number of other days may be substituted. Those who can fast, but with great difficulty, may substitute feeding one poor person for each day of breaking the fast. If one volunteers (more righteous works), it

is better. But fasting is the best for you, if you only knew. (2:184)

Benefits of Fasting

God would never ask us to fast if it was not beneficial for us, both spiritually and physically. God tells us that the human beings do not always have a good judgment of what is good for them "... *you may dislike something which is good for you, and you may like something which is bad for you. GOD knows while you do not know.*" (2:216)

Fasting, like all other religious duties, helps us to remember God and appreciate His blessings. God does not need our fasting. It is we who need the benefits of fasting to attain salvation. To receive the spiritual benefits of fasting, we should maintain our righteousness and refrain from any behavior that may jeo-

pardize the positive growth of our souls.

There are numerous physical benefits for our body from fasting. One of the health benefits of fasting is the "detoxification." The excerpts below are taken from an article by W. Carroll on *The Health Benefits of Fasting*.

Detoxification is a normal body process of eliminating or neutralizing toxins through the colon, liver, kidneys, lungs, lymph glands, and skin." This process is precipitated by fasting because when food is no longer entering the body, the body turns to fat reserves for energy.... These fat reserves were created when excess glucose and carbohydrates were not used for energy or growth, not excreted, and therefore converted into fat.

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Prayer for Righteousness



We are informed at the beginning of the Quran in Sura 2 that righteousness is a necessary quality for redemption:

[2:2] This scripture is infallible; a beacon for the righteous;

[2:5] These are guided by their Lord; these are the winners.

[2:112] Indeed, those who submit themselves absolutely to GOD alone, while leading a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord; they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

We know that righteousness is more important than what sect or tribe a person is from, and it is the *most important garment*:

[49:13] O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another. The best among you in the sight of GOD is the most righteous. GOD is Omniscient, Cognizant.

[2:62] Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in GOD, and (2) believes in the Last Day, and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

[7:26] O children of Adam, we have provided you with garments to cover your bodies, as well as for luxury. But the best garment is the garment of righteousness. These are some of GOD's signs, that they may take heed.

Our accountable actions can be either righteous or evil:

[41:46] Whoever works righteousness does so for his own good, and whoever works evil does so to his own detriment. Your Lord is never unjust towards the people.

[11:114] You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) at both ends of the day, and during the night. The righteous works wipe out the evil works. This is a reminder for those who would take heed.

God provides a general definition of righteousness in the Quran, which we can use as a measuring stick for ourselves:

[2:177] Righteousness is not turning your faces towards the east or the west. Righteous are those who believe in GOD, the Last Day, the angels, the scripture, and the prophets; and they give the money, cheerfully, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveling alien, the beggars, and to free the slaves; and they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat); and they keep their word whenever they make a promise; and they steadfastly persevere in the face of persecution, hardship, and war. These are the truthful; these are the righteous.

[2:2-5] This scripture is infallible; a beacon for the righteous; who believe in the unseen, observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and from our provisions to them, they give to charity. And they believe in what was revealed to you, and in what was revealed before you, and with regard to the Hereafter, they are absolutely certain. These are guided by their Lord; these are the winners.

However, we cannot attain the required righteousness on our own volition:

[35:8] Note the one whose evil work is adorned in his eyes, until he thinks that it is righteous. GOD thus sends astray whoever wills (to go astray), and He guides whoever wills (to be guided). Therefore, do not grieve over them.

GOD is fully aware of everything they do.

[103:1-3] By the afternoon. The human being is utterly lost. Except those who believe and lead a righteous life, and exhort one another to uphold the truth, and exhort one another to be steadfast.

God informs us that we must pray to him to direct us to do the righteous works that please him. It is important to ask God for help in this matter:

Solomon prayed:

[27:19] ... "My Lord, direct me to be appreciative of the blessings You have bestowed upon me and my parents, and to do the righteous works that please You. Admit me by Your mercy into the company of Your righteous servants."

We are instructed to pray in the same manner:

[46:15] We enjoined the human being to honor his parents. His mother bore him arduously, gave birth to him arduously, and took intimate care of him for thirty months. When he reaches maturity, and reaches the age of forty, he should say, "My Lord, direct me to appreciate the blessings You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do the righteous works that please You. Let my children be righteous as well. I have repented to You; I am a submitter."

A sincere Submitter to God alone will receive the guidance from God:

[49:17] They act as if they are doing you a favor by embracing Submission! Say, "You are not doing me any favors by embracing Submission. GOD is the One who is doing you a great favor by guiding you to the faith, if you are sincere."

We see that we can attain righteousness through our sincerity in worshipping God alone and through His guidance and direction, which we have to ask for.

Kris. A. O.

2006 CONFERENCE REPORT



Unity of All Submitters

[2:62] Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in GOD, and (2) believes in the Last Day, and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

Praise be to God, this was the 21st annual United Submitters International Conference. This year, the conference was held at the Doubletree Hotel in Tucson, Arizona from August 4th through the 6th. A large crowd of submitters, over 230, from around the world gathered to share ideas and to commemorate God. The theme this year was the unity of all submitters.

The Friday prayer was led by Joseph from southern California. His wonderful khutba (sermon) reminded us to arrange our priorities, always putting God first. If we do that, all worldly things will fall into place.

After Abdullah's usual warm welcome, we were treated to a quiz from the Quran. We formed large groups, which gave submitters a chance to meet one another, working together to find the most words in each category. It was fun to see how much we knew from the Quran. Working together is how we

should face all our problems, pooling our wisdom and knowledge. Thanks to Carishma and Yasser for putting the games together.

Several first time attendees then told how they came to submission, bringing their enthusiasm to energize everyone.

The zikr (meditation) Friday and Saturday evenings was beautiful as always. Meauvell, Parivash and several others led the group in musical commemoration of God. Everyone's voices blending together to praise and worship God was awe-inspiring.

The talks were informative, fun, heartwarming and inspirational. There was personal sharing, which is always touching, and there were well-prepared power point talks that informed and stimulated us all. So many things that we can learn from each other. The sharing of thoughts and ideas helps us all to grow in submission.

Too soon it was Sunday noon and we had to share last hugs and say goodbye to old and new friends alike. Perhaps because it was so hard to part, at least half of the attendees came to Masjid Tucson for a pizza party. We've never seen so many people in the Mosque at one time. It was wonderful!! It was hot and perhaps we didn't have enough food in time for some people, but no one minded. It was just a time to be together before we had to say goodbye for another year.

May God bless the organizers of the conference for all their hard work putting the event together. Thanks to Faiz, Kenan and Mahdi for their duties as emcees. They did a great job. Peace and blessings upon everyone who made the effort to attend—to share their ideas and absorb ideas from others. May God

keep us united and at peace, and allow us to spread His message to the world.

God willing, the conference for next year was tentatively planned for the second weekend of August in Ontario, California. Normally we hold the conference in the first week of August, but the organizers could not find suitable hotel with enough meeting space available for that week. But God willing they will try to move the dates to one week earlier if the hotel meeting space becomes available. Let us know right away if it's hard for you to attend that second weekend before the dates are finalized.

Peace

Lydia and Nargis

[18:28] You shall force yourself to be with those who worship their Lord day and night, seeking Him alone. Do not turn your eyes away from them, seeking the vanities of this world. Nor shall you obey one whose heart we rendered oblivious to our message; one who pursues his own desires, and whose priorities are confused.

[29:46] Do not argue with the people of the scripture (Jews, Christians, and Muslims) except in the nicest possible manner—unless they transgress—and say, “We believe in what was revealed to us and in what was revealed to you, and our god and your god is one and the same; to Him we are submitters.”

Give ear to my words, O Lord,
Consider my meditation.
Give heed to the voice of my cry,
My King and my God,
For to You I will pray.
My voice You shall hear
 in the morning, O Lord;
In the morning I will direct it to You,
And I will look up. (Psalm 5:1-3)

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Ramadan

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When the fat reserves are used for energy during a fast, it releases the chemicals from the fatty acids into the system which are then eliminated through the aforementioned organs....

A second prescribed benefit of fasting is the healing process that begins in the body during a fast. During a fast energy is diverted away from the digestive system due to its lack of use and towards the metabolism and immune system. The healing process during a fast is precipitated by the body's search for energy sources. Abnormal growths within the body, tumors and the like, do not have the full support of the body's supplies and therefore are more susceptible to autolysis. Autolysis is the breaking down of fat stores in the body in order to produce energy. Furthermore, "production of protein for replacement of damaged cells (protein synthesis) occurs more efficiently..."

A higher efficiency in protein synthesis results in healthier cells, tissues and organs. This is one reason that animals stop eating when they are wounded, and why humans lose hunger during influenza. Hunger has been proven absent in illnesses such as gastritis, tonsillitis and colds. Therefore, when one is fasting, the person is consciously diverting energy from the digestive system to the immune system.

In addition, there is a reduction in core body temperature. This is a direct result of the slower metabolic rate and general bodily functions. Following a drop in blood sugar level and using the re-

serves of glucose found in liver glycogen, the basal metabolic rate (BMR) is reduced in order to conserve as much energy within the body as can be provided. Growth hormones are also released during a fast, due to the greater efficiency in hormone production.

Finally, the most scientifically proven advantage to fasting is the feeling of rejuvenation... Part of this phenomenon is caused by a number of the benefits mentioned above. A slower metabolic rate, more efficient protein production, an improved immune system, and the increased production of hormones contributes to this long-term benefit of fasting.

Ramadan This Year

God willing the first day of Ramadan for North America (and all parts of the Western hemisphere) is September 23 and, the last day is October 22. The Night of Destiny (Night of Power) starts at the sunset of October 18, 2006.

For more information and details, please see our Ramadan page at <http://www.masjidtucson.org/submission/practices/ramadan/index.html>

God willing we hope everyone will have a happy, peaceful and wonderful Ramadan.